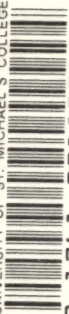


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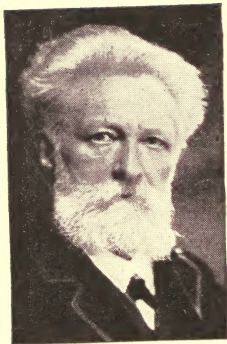
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Chas. H. Williams

Oct. 1909.

TOS.



**Prof. Rudolph Eucken, Ph.D.,**  
*of Jena, One of the Greatest of  
Living Thinkers.*





THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE



# THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE

AS VIEWED BY THE GREAT THINKERS  
FROM PLATO TO THE PRESENT TIME

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

It is a genuine pleasure to me to see "The Problem of Human Life" in an English Version, particularly as the translation has been prepared with great care by esteemed friends, and is, I think, entirely successful.

The present book forms the essential complement of all my other works. It is designed to afford historical confirmation of the view that conceptions are determined by life, not life by conceptions. Under the guidance of this conviction the book traverses the whole spiritual development of the Western world, in the hope that the several phases of the development, and, above all, its great personalities, will be brought nearer to the personal experience of the reader than is customarily done. Particularly in an age of predominant specialisation, when the pursuit of learning too often endangers the completeness of living, such an endeavour is fully justified.

I hope that the English-speaking public will give the book a sympathetic reception. With their own thinkers, the problem of life has always stood in the foreground, and scientific research steadily regarded the whole life of man. Thus my book presents nothing foreign to the genius of the English-speaking peoples: may it be felt and welcomed by them as something kindred to their own aims!

RUDOLF EUCKEN.

*Jena.*



## TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

THE following translation of Eucken's "Die Lebensanschauungen der grossen Denker: Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte des Lebensproblems der Menschheit von Plato bis zur Gegenwart" is based substantially upon the seventh German edition, Leipzig, 1907. But, owing to the rapidity with which the three last editions have succeeded the fifth, and to unavoidable interruptions of the work of translation, the above statement requires a word of explanation. The translation was begun from the fifth edition, and had progressed as far as the section on Origen, when the sixth edition appeared. This edition presented no changes, other than purely verbal ones, in the portion already translated, except in the account of Plato, particularly the important section on the Theory of Ideas. The passages affected were, of course, revised in accordance with the text of the new edition. The seventh edition being almost immediately called for, and Mr. Boyce Gibson having consented to undertake the translation of Part Third, the relatively extensive alterations and additions designed for this edition were communicated to the translators in MS. The new material, however, with but two or three exceptions, concerned only the portions not yet translated, and was accordingly readily incorporated into the text. The translation as it stands, therefore, is in all essential respects a version of the seventh German edition.<sup>1</sup>

But mention should be made of certain omissions from the text of the original in Parts First and Second. The author gave his ready assent to the exercise of a minor editorial privilege in this regard; and, solely with a view to condensation, a few para-

<sup>1</sup> The eighth edition, which has appeared since the translation was in type, contains, as the author has assured the translators, "no material changes or additions, but only verbal improvements of the German text, which may be entirely ignored, so far as the translation is concerned."

graphs, and an occasional sentence or even phrase, particularly in the relatively long accounts of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine, and in the section on Origen, have been omitted, entirely at the discretion of the first-named translator. No attempt has been made to indicate the points at which such omissions occurred; but their whole number would not aggregate more than a few pages.

The work of translation has been divided as follows, each translator being solely responsible for the portion undertaken by him. Parts First and Second, on Hellenism and on Christianity respectively, and the Author's Preface to the English Edition, have been translated by Mr. Hough; Part Third, on the Modern World, and the Introduction, have been translated by Mr. Gibson. It should be said, however, that nearly all of the first draft of those parts for which Mr. Gibson is responsible was made by his wife, and that her collaboration upon the whole work of this portion has been of the first importance. For the preparation of the Indexes the translators are further indebted to Mrs. Gibson, and, in part, to Mrs. Hough.

The translators have felt keenly the difficulty of deciding upon an English title for the work which would be wholly free from objection. The title finally adopted may at first appear to be a bold substitution; but familiarity with the work will make it clear that in reality it sounds the key-note of the book. If it be objected that the virtual transposition of the principal and the subordinate title of the original could only result in a change of emphasis, the reply is that this alternative was chosen as the least of many evils. It may be added that the author preferred the title adopted to any of the others proposed.

In preparing the English Version the translators have set accuracy before all else. They are, however, of opinion that fidelity is in general not to be secured by literal transcription. Moreover, since the present work is designed for the larger public as well as for academic uses, they have endeavoured to keep the diction as free as possible from technical expressions and from traces of German idiom. At the same time it should



be said that the style of the original, by virtue indeed of the very qualities which give it its distinction and individuality, presents certain difficulties which the translators cannot hope wholly to have surmounted; and, particularly in view of the distinguished recognition which the literary value of the author's work has recently received, they submit their translation to the public with no little diffidence.

In conclusion, the translators desire to express their obligations to Lady Welby, who kindly read Part First in MS., and made numerous valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur C. McGiffert, who similarly read the MS. of Part Second, and gave it the benefit of his intimate knowledge of early Christianity; but particularly to the author, who not only read the entire translation in MS., but has throughout assisted the translators with advice on any points of unusual difficulty.

W. S. H.

W. R. B. G.



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## INTRODUCTION

WHAT does our life mean when viewed as a whole? What are the purposes it seeks to realise? What prospect of happiness does it hold out to us? To ask these questions is to set ourselves the Problem of Life, nor need we stay to justify our right to ask them. They force themselves on us to-day with resistless insistence. They are the cry of an age rent inwardly asunder, its heart at enmity with the work of its hands. The labour of the preceding centuries, nay, of the last few decades, has indeed been immeasurably fruitful. It has given birth to a new culture and to new views of the universe. But its triumphal progress has not implied a simultaneous advancement of the inward life; its dazzling victories have not been won for the spirit and substance of man. With relentless energy it has driven us more and more exclusively upon the world without us, subduing us to its necessities, pressing us more and more closely into the service of our environment. And the activities of our life ultimately determine our nature. If our powers are wholly concentrated on outward things and there is an ever-diminishing interest in the inner life, the soul inevitably suffers. Inflated with success, we yet find ourselves empty and poor. We have become the mere tools and instruments of an impersonal civilisation which first uses and then forsakes us, the victims of a power as pitiless as it is inhuman, which rides rough-shod over nations and individuals alike, ruthless of life or death, knowing neither plan nor reason, void of all love or care for man.

A movement of this nature, the disintegrating influences of which affect so closely the feelings and the convictions of the individual, cannot subsist long without reaction. In matters such as these, the problem is no sooner felt than the reaction

begins. Men cannot for long deny their spiritual nature and suppress all concern for its welfare. Their inner life holds its own against all pressure from without; it persists in relating all events to itself and summoning them for judgment before its own tribunal. Even opposition serves but to remind the Subject of the fundamental and inalienable rights of its own inwardness and freedom. So a slumbering giant needs only to be roused to the consciousness of his power to show himself superior to all the forces the world can bring against him. And when simultaneously with these changes an elemental passion for individuality of life and inner well-being asserts itself, when the rationality of existence, the salvation of the soul, become pressing, torturing problems, of a sudden the whole aspect of the world is transformed; that which was once held a sure possession now becomes a matter of painful perplexity and an object of weary search.

A regenerative movement of this kind is now in perceptible progress: and though the Powers of Mechanism still continue to extend their outward sway, our faith in them is shaken and the struggle against them has begun. Great movements are abroad to-day which, despite manifold differences of tendency, converge to a common issue. The passionate impetus of the social movement, the evidences of increasing religious earnestness, the ferment of artistic creation, all express one and the same desire, an ardour of longing for more happiness, for a fuller development of our human nature, for a new and a loftier order of life.

And yet, despite its progress, the movement is still in many respects very incomplete and chaotic. It is not only that certain of its side-currents variously intersect and frustrate each other; the main stream itself is a curious blend of higher and lower, nobility and meanness, youthful freshness and senile punctiliousness. Instead of seeking to transform his inward experience into an ordered cosmos and to strengthen freedom into law, the Subject is apt to measure his progress by the extent to which he can dispense with all authority, not excluding

that of his own nature. Breaking free from all restraint, he is borne aloft like some vain empty bubble, the plaything of wind and weather, and falls an easy prey to every kind of irrationality and folly. Thus we are conscious primarily of an atmosphere of ferment, restlessness, passion. We preserve our faith in the rationality of the movement only by treating it as a mere beginning and trusting that the spiritual necessity at work within it will in the end prevail over all individual illusions and conceits and build up the inward life on a systematic and well-ordered plan. To this end, however, our untiring co-operation is essential: we must sift and separate, clarify and deepen. Only through the strain of self-conflict can the Age truly realise itself, and accomplish its part in the evolution of the world's history.

Nor can Philosophy stand aloof from the struggle; she also has her part to play. Is she not pre-eminently fitted to give this movement a large and generous meaning, to clear it from confusion and direct it toward its ultimate goal? Her first duty indeed is to the present and to the problems of the day; nor is she at liberty to take refuge from present issues in a near or a distant past. Historical considerations are—for the philosopher—subsidiary; and yet, if he respects the limitations under which they can alone be of service to him, they may most effectively support his own personal conviction. We would then briefly consider the following view: that it is both possible and useful to represent to ourselves in a living way the various philosophies of life as they have taken shape in the minds of the great thinkers. For with this contention is bound up the whole success or failure of our present undertaking.

If these philosophies are to be of any help to us, we must give to the term "philosophy of life" a deeper meaning than it usually bears. We cannot interpret it as a set of select utterances on the subject of human life and destiny, or as a collection of occasional reflections and confessions. For such deliverances spring frequently from the mere mood of the moment, and serve to conceal rather than reveal the essential

quality of their author's thought. Moreover, shallow natures are not infrequently prodigal of confession—natures that have little that is worth confiding—while deeper souls are apt to withdraw their emotion from the public gaze, holding it sacred to the heart or bodying it forth only in their work.

No; we are not concerned with the reflections of these thinkers about life, but with life itself as it is fashioned forth in their world of thought. We ask what light they have thrown upon human existence, what place and purport they assign to it, how they combine its active with its passive functions; in a word, what is the character of human life as they conceive it? This question draws together the different threads of their thought and reveals to us the very depths of their soul. They become easy of access and of comprehension; they can make themselves known to us quite simply and speak in plain, straightforward fashion to all who will give them a hearing. Surely this quest offers strong inducement to every receptive mind. From the abundance of these great personalities must there not be some overflow of strength, something that will purify, ennoble, and level up our own endeavour?

Nor need we be troubled with the question whether these great thinkers supply everything that is essential and valuable in human achievement. We can at least say that they constitute the soul of it. For true creative work, the upbuilding of a realm of spiritual meanings and values, is not the product of mediocrity, but arises rather out of a direct antagonism to all that is petty and small in human affairs. On the lower level, spiritual activity is much too closely blent with alien and inferior elements, too solely at the disposal of small-minded aims, for it to be capable of producing any clearly defined and distinctive conceptions of life. At all periods, it has been only the few who have possessed the greatness of mind, the inward freedom, the constructive power which alone make it possible to pursue the path of creative activity as an end in itself, to wrest unity from chaos, to win through the stress and strain of true creative work that glad and sure self-confidence without



which thought has no stability and work no profit. This, however, does not mean that the creative genius is independent of his social and historical environment. Even that which is greatest has its necessary presuppositions and conditions. The soil must be ready, the age must contribute the stimulus of its special problems, enthusiasm must be trained to willing service. To this limited extent a genius is but the ripe expression of his epoch, and the luminous idea only serves to intensify aspirations already alive in the community. But none the less does the great man lift the common life to an essentially higher plane. He does not merely unify existing tendencies, but brings about an inner transformation: he ennobles the whole message of the age. For it is he who first clearly distinguishes the spiritual from the merely human, the eternal from the temporal, who first gives to life an independent worth, a value of its own, who first attains to the conception of universal and imperishable truth. In so far as the Eternal can be apprehended under time conditions, it is so apprehended by the great man; it is he who first frees it from its temporal setting to become a possession for all time. If then the creative geniuses of humanity are the true foci of all spiritual life, if in them its rays, else scattered, are concentrated to burn thereafter with an intensified, inextinguishable flame that in turn reilluminates the whole,—then surely we may take comfort and rest assured that in studying the work of such men we are touching the very pulse of all creative activity.

And the same reason that makes it worth our while to study them individually renders it equally advisable to consider carefully the relations of each to his contemporaries and successors. In the contemplation of these various types we become more distinctly and vividly aware of the different schemes of life open to us. The extremes between which we ordinarily oscillate are here set forth in most palpable form, and help to explain each other while defining their own positions ever more clearly. But as the ages pass and one set of conditions is replaced by another, there is a tendency for the permanent to

become confused with the transitory. On the one hand, our multiplicity of systems seems to admit of reduction to a limited number of simple types, which, like the motifs of a tune, constantly recur through all changes of environment, and yet we perceive at the same time a steady progress, a constant influx of what is new. Life and the world open out in ever-broadening vistas. Problems of increasing difficulty arise; the current flows swifter and stronger. The whole detailed story would be needed to show us what this movement has achieved for us. We may not forestall the conclusion by any hasty generalising. So much, however, we may say, that if at first the history of philosophy seem like a battle in which every man's hand is against his fellow, in which the leaders are so engrossed with the development of their own individuality that they repel rather than attract each other, yet we must not on this account despair of unity and progress. One doctrine defies another only so long as the respective systems are regarded in the light of finished results and the intellect is called upon to be the sole and final arbiter of every question. Now it is precisely from such inadequate conceptions that this study of ours can rescue us. When we ask how our great thinkers looked at life, we see that their thought had its source in the depths of the life-process itself, that its course is determined by certain vital needs, that it is but the expression of an inward struggle toward truth and happiness and spirituality. On the larger plane of this life-process many things help and supplement each other which in the more narrow and definite region of conceptual thinking are frankly antagonistic. It were even possible that all divisions should be included within one general progressive movement, and that in the friction of one mind with another we should find the true seat of creative activity. Now the principal phases of this movement are given us by the great thinkers, if we but pierce to the heart of their endeavour. It is under their guidance that we may be led from a remote past to the very threshold of our own day. It is they who can make the past live again for us, put us in possession of all that human

effort has achieved, and transplant us from a present of mere immediacy into a present that transcends our time-experience. It is this wider, more significant present that we so sorely need to-day; we need it to counteract the rush and hurry of everyday life, the narrowness of party spirit, the looseness of prevalent standards. Surely in fighting these things we do well to summon to our aid the life-work of the great thinkers.

But, with all its attractions, the undertaking is fraught with difficulties of no ordinary kind. Can we bring the object of our study close to us, can we enter into sympathetic communion with him, and yet observe the necessary amount of objectivity in our treatment? The answer must depend on what we mean by objectivity. What we certainly do *not* want is an objectivity which fights shy of all subjective verdicts; for such objective treatment, no matter how exact and thorough, can do no more than collect and arrange the data, and if it gives even a passable presentation of its object, it only does so inadvertently by filling in the gaps with merely conventional appreciations. No! At every moment our task compels us to judge for ourselves, to classify and divide, to sift and to separate. This is true even as regards such relatively external matters as the choice of material; much more do we need to exercise independence of judgment if we would penetrate to the unity which underlies and dominates the most varied forms of expression, if we would share the inward experiences of the great men whom we study, and recognise that they are organically related to each other and linked together in one unbroken sequence. And yet, whilst we discountenance an unspiritual objectivity, it must not be supposed that we give ourselves over to an unbridled subjectivity. It cannot be right for us to interpret the personality we are studying in the light of our subjective preferences, or develop his meaning only in so far as he seems to confirm our previous convictions. Such a procedure would never allow us to penetrate to his real self; still less would it acquaint us with the inner currents of human progress, or conduce to that larger thought and wider horizon which we hope to gain through our



inquiry. We conclude, then, that while striving to get into close contact with each thinker, we must yet not obtrude ourselves too far. We must allow him to speak for himself and to make good his own position. Our final verdict must not be the result of individual reflection; it must be reached through a vivid portrayal of the man himself and of the influence he has exercised on the world at large. Nothing should be to us more vitally important than the endeavour to re-establish a direct relation between reader and Thinker. That such an undertaking implies at the same time an independent stand-point, particularly in relation to the Philosophy of History, will be at once obvious to all who are familiar with such questions.

Other difficulties arise out of our relationship to learned specialisation. We have no quarrel with specialisation in itself. For not only does the very growth of detailed inquiry call for the syntheses that shall gather the detail together; these more comprehensive pictures themselves gain their richness from the detail. The more exact our information as to the relation of the Thinker to his historical and social environment, the more skilful the analysis of his work into its component threads, the more clear-cut and vivid will the outlines of our picture become. A quarrel becomes inevitable only when the specialist brooks no other work than his, when he thinks his apparatus sufficient to fathom the whole personality, when he tries to explain greatness as the accumulated result of infinitesimal accretions; for what really makes the Thinker great is that which transcends mere historical explanation: it is the power of original creation, the Unity which animates and illumines everything from within. And to this, mere learning and criticism are necessarily blind. It reveals itself only to an Intuition whose mode of apprehension is sympathetically creative. It is even possible that the merely learned study of a personality may remove us further from him, by interposing between the spectator and the object something that claims attention for itself, thus disturbing the total impression. Let us beware then of confusing accidentals with essentials, means

with ends; of overlooking ideas in our anxiety about facts, and making original research do duty for spiritual intuition.

We are bound, in entering upon the present work, to observe the utmost care and caution. But we must not let the difficulties daunt us and cloud the joy with which we embark upon our task. Despite all perplexities, there is a quite peculiar charm—and profit, too, shall we add—in trying to understand how the great thinkers looked at life. The deep yearning for truth and happiness which breathes from all their writings carries us away by its intensity; and yet there is something magically soothing and strengthening in the mature works into which such yearnings have been crystallised. Different though our own conviction may be, we rejoice none the less in the victories of creative genius and the transparent lucidity of its productions. Our culture is constantly bringing us into close touch with these master-minds; our work is linked with theirs by a myriad threads. Yet, closely as they concern us, their personality as a whole is often strangely unfamiliar; there may be an utter absence of any real intimacy between us and them. We gaze into the Pantheon from without, but the gods do not descend from their lofty pedestals to share our trials and sorrows, nor do they even seem to be fellow-workers with each other. How different when we turn to the inner sources of their creative activity, when we penetrate to those deep regions of the spirit in which their work reveals itself as the expression and assertion of their true nature. The frozen forms then warm into life and begin to speak to us. We see them impelled by the same problems which determine our own weal and woe. We also see them linked together as workers in one common task: the task of building up a spiritual world within the realm of human life, of proving our existence to be both spiritual and rational. The walls of division break down at last, and we pass into the Pantheon as into a world that belongs to us, as into our own spiritual home.



*PART FIRST*  
HELLENISM



# HELLENISM

## A. THINKERS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

### I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE GREEK CHARACTER AND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HELLENISM

A JUST estimate of the Greek thinkers is often rendered difficult by an overestimate of the average character of the Greek people. What the intellectual leaders produced at the cost of supreme effort is vaguely attributed to the natural endowment of the people as a whole. Because creative activity at its height found joy and felicity in itself, and from this elevation shed abroad a bright serenity of mood, Greek life in general puts on the appearance of a perpetual festival; and because among the great a distinguished sentiment scorned all considerations of mere utility, the thinking and feeling of the whole nation seems raised to intellectual nobility. Thus the creations of genius appear to be scarcely more than a precipitation of the social atmosphere. But this impression rapidly vanishes on closer view. Whoever follows the average political activity of the Greeks, with its unrest and passion, its envy and malice; whoever considers the multitudinous forms of Greek avarice and Greek craftiness; whoever turns from Greek comedy to cast a glance at the often downright repulsive everyday life—will soon be convinced that even the Greeks were men like ourselves, that they too did not acquire their greatness as a simple inheritance from nature, but had to achieve it by hard struggle, even against themselves. Accordingly, the position of the great thinkers is relatively raised, and we see that

their life-work extends its influence far beyond their immediate surroundings.

But to contend for the great superiority of the thinkers as compared with the average does not imply that we would detach them from the intellectual character of the nation. Rather, the common intellectual life, with its strength and freshness, its mobility and buoyancy, prepared the way for the thinkers, and surrounded them with a stimulating, formative, and guiding influence. True, they could not realise their aims without trusting above all to their own genius, and without unhesitatingly waging war upon the popular traditions. But their labours had not the depressing isolation and loneliness which later ages, with a more erudite culture and more complex conditions of life, often show. This close relationship of the thinkers with their people is particularly noteworthy during the epoch of the moulding of civilisation by national forces, which will first occupy us; but it is not lost in the Hellenistic period, when the tendency is to pass from the national to the broadly human standpoint, and when thought is rather the work of isolated individuals. Indeed, even in the later, confused times, when Hellenism was submerged by the enormous influx of foreign elements, the smaller arteries of the national life still showed traces of the classical way of thinking; thus even upon the approaching night was shed a ray of the same sun under whose full splendour the immortal masterpieces were perfected.

Accordingly, to form a just appreciation of the Greek thinkers, we must first recall their intellectual environment. Nothing about the Greeks impresses one more than their great energy of life, the strong impetus toward the development of every faculty, the youthful, ever-fresh pleasure in creative activity. Indolence is unsparingly condemned; action does not need the endorsement of a reward—it fascinates and delights in itself. To take up an active relation to things was ever the essence of Greek wisdom. But, with all its mobility, action here never leaves the sphere of the present world; it does not presume to create things of its own initiative; it rather assigns to the objective world a



nature of its own, and seeks to effect a fruitful interaction, by which it at once fashions the world and adjusts itself to it. Consequently, we find here no senseless brooding, no dreamy weaving of detached sentiments; the mood always springs from and follows activity. But if action unites us so closely with things, the latter can be of use to us, and our intellectual nature will communicate itself to them. The Greek habit of thought personifies its environment; it throws out on all sides a reflection of human life. Since, however, it does not rob things of their peculiar character, they have a reciprocal effect upon human life, and enlarge, clarify, and ennoble it. Hence the personification of nature by the Greeks is incomparably more refined and fruitful than that of other peoples; and human life, by being thus mirrored objectively in the universe, receives a thorough purification and outgrows the crudity of nature.

Action, too, is the best defensive weapon amid the dangers and trials of human existence. Whatever fortunes befell the Greek, his attitude was active; he always sought to bring to bear his own powers, and hence to wrest something rational from every experience, even from suffering. Whatever was hostile he attacked with spirit, and if he could not completely conquer it, he at least energetically repelled it. In such a strife man unfolds his powers, indeed attains that greatness of soul which makes him superior to the world. Such an attitude is the opposite not only of all trifling with moral evil, but also of a comfortable optimism. Where the experience of life is reflected so fully and clearly in the minds of men as appears in the intellectual work of the Greeks, the antagonistic forces also will be deeply felt. In fact, Hellenism wrestled in good earnest with all manner of obstacles; it steadily modified both the world of things and itself; in time its activity necessarily became more and more purely inward. But so long as it endured, it found the means of remaining active; and from such an active attitude it drew ever fresh courage, and even under the growing harshness of life it steadfastly asserted that the core of existence is rational. Hence prominent modern scholars are in error when they declare

that the Greeks were pessimists. For no one is a pessimist merely because he feels deeply the suffering of life; rather it is he who yields to it, who gives up striving because of it. And that the Greeks never did.

Just as man here places his chief reliance on activity, so also his creations are instinct with life and action. Human societies, particularly his own native state, appear as living beings, animate individuals; furthermore, nothing is more characteristic of the works of Greek art than that they are embodiments of spiritual movement. This animation extends to the smallest elements; even what is otherwise rigid and dead here manifests the pulsation of inner life.

This eager attitude toward the world of things leads us to expect both that man's activity will do full justice to the wealth of the actual world and that it will itself be developed into greater versatility. And we find, in fact, that the work of civilisation extends with wonderful universality into every sphere; all the realms of experience are successively explored, and to each is rendered its due. Movements which elsewhere exclude one another are here taken up with equal vigour and sympathy, and all the chief tendencies shown by the development of civilisation down even to the present time are found in germ. Whoever disputes this, and denies that the Greeks were great in religion, for instance, or in law, in exact science or in technical inventions, either estimates their achievements by alien standards or confines himself to the period alone celebrated as classical. In particular, the attention of modern critics often dwells too exclusively on what may indeed be the greatest, but is by no means the sole, characteristic of the Greeks, namely, their power of synthesis, of artistic shaping into a whole. But that the Greeks were also strong in sober observation, in acute analysis, and in illuminating reflection, is equally true, and belongs no less to the complete picture of their intellectual traits.

Such breadth prevents their work as a whole from being cramped and narrowed by the peculiar nature of a single domain; rather it is left free and receptive enough to assimilate something

from all sides; and by these many-sided experiences progress is made. This elasticity renders possible a significant history; great changes may take place without a loss of the traditional character and without destroying the continuity. The Greek considers himself distinguished from the barbarian in nothing so much as in the breadth and freedom of his life, when compared with the torpid narrow-mindedness of the latter.

Kindred to freedom is lucidity. Whatever touches and moves man, whatever befalls him from without, and what is given to him from within, must alike attain complete transparency. Not until it does so, not until all the obscurity of the first stages is removed, and the result stands forth clear as sunlight, can any experience be recognised as forming part of human life and activity.

This striving for clearness, however, differentiates itself into two movements, which at once oppose and supplement each other, namely, a theoretical and an artistic movement.

On the one hand, there is the eager impulse to understand, to dispel all obscurity from the world by vigorous thought. What is here required is to bring order out of the given confusion, to concatenate all phenomena, to refer the various expressions of life to a common basis, to discern amid all change abiding entities. Such an effort is indeed much older than theoretical knowledge; even the earliest literary creations contain, although in veiled form, the thought of a universal order of things, a disavowal of vague, blind chance. But the theoretical movement cannot rise to the plane of science without shifting the point of view from the visible to the invisible world. Indeed, by its growth in independence, thought eventually becomes strong enough to trust solely to its own necessary laws, and to sacrifice the whole sensuous world, *i. e.*, degrade it to the rank of mere appearance, in order to achieve knowledge of true being. By this development the Greeks become the creators of metaphysic. But the metaphysical trait characterising their work extends far beyond academic science; for great thoughts pervade their whole life and creative activity. Even in the mental life of the individual, the same impulse leads to clearness and to

definite consciousness; whatever cannot give a rational account of itself is esteemed of little value; lucid knowledge must accompany and illuminate all conduct. Indeed, insight becomes the innermost soul of life; goodness appears to depend upon correct knowledge; evil, on the other hand, is an intellectual mistake, an error of judgment.

But this predominance of the intellectual, this resolution of existence into abstract conceptions, is counterbalanced by the strong desire for sense-perception and for artistic form. The Greek wants not only to understand but to see; he wants to have the image as a whole before him, and to hold fast to its sensuous existence; exact thought finds a companion in light-winged fantasy; yet even the latter is not without laws, but steadily aims at proportion, order, and harmony. Everything here tends to assume completely definite shape; all form is outwardly limited and in itself graduated; all relations are duly considered and definitely established; everything individual, by imposing a limit, receives one. The extension of this formative activity over the world of experience transforms the original chaos into a cosmos; it also banishes everything uncouth and grotesque. Above all, the eye must be gratified; for its perceptions reveal the full splendour of beauty, and lead up to the mountain tops of life. Such an attitude is intolerant of any chasm between inner and outer; it is not satisfied with dreamy intimations or symbolic allusions; for it, delineation is not an accessory, but the indispensable completion of the thing itself. By this demand for sense-perception, activity is continually being brought back to the immediate world, and held fast there. The recognition of the multiplicity of things, which threatened to disappear before the unity sought for by thought, here upholds its undoubted rights; while beauty shows herself to be the twin-sister of rigorous truth. The union of these two tendencies, the artistic form taken by intellectual forces, represents the highest attainment of the creative activity of the Greeks. On the one hand, the instinct for form prevents the search for truth from detaching itself from the world and becoming lost in the



pathless and the illimitable; on the other, artistic construction is supplied with a noble material, and avoids sinking to the level of mere sensuous charm and pleasure. By means of such reciprocal relations, the whole acquires inner movement, inexhaustible life, and perennial freshness.

A thoroughly unique character is revealed even in these few traits; and this is the character which furnishes the environment for the work of the philosophers and for the formation of views of life. But views of life of the philosophical stamp do not appear until late; and when they do appear, a considerable intellectual labour, in the form of inner liberation, has already been accomplished. The more naïve state, in which man's life was closely interwoven with the visible environment, such as we see depicted in the Homeric poems, had already passed away. And the growth of the new conditions unfortunately cannot be traced, owing to the profound darkness that obscures the inner movements of the eighth and seventh centuries; and because in the sixth century the development was already fully unfolded, and in the fifth its triumph was consummated. All the principal spheres of life were by this time pervaded by a free and serious spirit.

This was the case, first of all, with religion. True, the ancient gods were still held in honour, but their traditional representation was none the less subjected to a searching critique. Indignation was now aroused by anything which gave offence to the purified moral ideas; open conflict with the older views was indeed not shunned, but also in a quieter way, perhaps hardly noticed, a transference of interest to the moral and intellectual spheres took place. At the same time, the desire for unity grew; although the plurality of divinities had by no means disappeared, polytheism was no longer a simple belief in co-existing deities; for a single divine Being was discerned as pervading all phenomena. Also, there now appeared germs of new developments, developments in different, indeed conflicting, directions. From the side of theoretical investigation arose a pantheistic tendency, the conviction that there is an all-compre-

hensive life, an impersonal Deity, from which the soul of man is derived, and to which it returns after life's course is run. On the other hand, from a deeper sense of the injustice of earthly things, and from solicitude for personal happiness and welfare, sprang an effort to rise above immediate existence, a detaching of the soul from the body, a belief in personal immortality, and a hope of a better Beyond. This was seen in the Orphic and Pythagorean societies.

At the same time, the ethical life also won a greater independence and inwardness; in particular, the idea of the Mean as a moral criterion rose to power, and afforded at once a support for the mind and a standard for conduct. In the ethical sphere, and also in general, poetry exerted a powerful influence toward the deepening of spiritual life; indeed, an influence far above that exerted by the maxims of the aphorists. The development of lyric poetry, too, created a rich emotional life and increased the self-consciousness of the individual; love, or Eros, found an expression both in plastic art and in poetry. But the more inward and sensitive life became, the more difficult were the problems, and the deeper grew the feeling of the contradictions of human existence. The drama courageously attacked these profounder problems, and in its own way cast up the sum of human destiny. Before philosophy gave a support to life the poets were the teachers of wisdom, the intermediaries between the old traditions and the future world of thought.

The changes in the life of the State, moreover, affected the total welfare of man. The growth of democracy roused individuals to activity and to the employment of all their powers; there resulted an increase of the points of contact, and of the rapidity of the development of life. It was no longer possible to take the traditional régime as self-evident: the laws were codified, and thence arose general problems; people began to inquire into the rationality of the existing order, to compare the political arrangements of other states with their own, and to try new schemes. Thus, much passed into a fluid state, and a wide field was opened to critical discussion. There also took place

an outward expansion of life due to the rapid growth of trade and commerce, and particularly to the founding of the colonies, which, owing to the contact afforded with the civilisations of other peoples, powerfully stimulated the minds of the Greeks. It was therefore no accident that philosophy took its rise in the colonies.

With the change in the manner of life, the outlook upon the world changed. Philosophy, which in the case of the Greeks does not start from man and the problem of his happiness, but from the universe as a whole, aims to comprehend the world in a natural way, by means of its own interconnections; it seeks for an immutable substance, or for fixed quantitative relations. It is forced to discard the first impression of things, and to destroy their visible image; but with a sure instinct for the essential it reconstructs the world in outlines whose simplicity bears the marks of genius and excites our perpetual wonder. Thus, the mythological view of the world is successfully transcended, but less by direct attack than by providing a substitute.

The effort to reach an independent explanation of things received additional assistance from astronomy. By showing that the movements of the stars are constant and conform to law, by discovering fixed systems in the structure of the universe and uniting the whole into the view of a cosmos, it was proved that even the Deity must put aside all arbitrary power and submit to the sway of law. The independent order and harmony of things proclaims the rationality of the world far more emphatically than the most marvellous interference with the regular course of things could do. That such a rationality not only sways the great world, but extends also to what is minute, to the apparently intangible, as it appears in the relations of number and limit, was disclosed in a startling manner by the discovery of the mathematical relations of tones. A strong influence upon the view of the world was exerted also by medicine. Not only was this science forced by its care for health into ascertaining with more exactness the causal connections within its own field, but



it increased the precision of the conception of causation in general; it also revealed the close relation of man to nature, and recognised in him a miniature universe—the microcosm, which was conceived to bear within itself all the principal fluids and forces of the great world.

Finally, man's own life and conduct were subjected to the scrutiny of an objective examination. The historian's art had barely attained independence before it manifested also a critical spirit, discriminated and sifted authorities, and in its judgments of human destiny diminished and restrained the element of the supernatural. Although writers personally maintained a pious reverence for the invisible powers, the trend of investigation was toward the explanation of events by the linking of causes and effects, and toward the connecting of individual destiny with personal conduct.

The simultaneous development of all these movements presents a marvellous drama, which is without a parallel in history. There was a progress of incomparable vigour and freshness, rising from dreamy perplexity and childlike submissiveness to an alert, free, manly existence; the inner life steadily grew in independence, and the narrowness of a merely human view yielded more and more to one illuminated by knowledge of the universe. In the midst of such changes, the sense of man's power emerged and grew; great personalities appeared and made their individual traits felt; spiritual unrest seized the world; general problems sprang up and dominated thought; everywhere there was an impulse to have matters cleared up, explained, and mentally assimilated; everywhere there was a strong development in intellectual work and in general culture.

Yet this progress of the new and decline of the old did not at first result in an abrupt break or complete revolution. In strengthening his own powers, man had not yet cut himself loose from things, nor shaken off the common associations. The time had not come when the individual takes his stand solely upon his own resources and boldly bids defiance to the whole world.

But this time had to come, and it came. The increased power of the individual, which is the result of every intellectual movement on a large scale, eventually produces in excitable and active minds a feeling of unlimited superiority, of complete independence. Such a tendency transforms intellectual liberation into "enlightenment"; and, so long as a counterpoise is wanting, enlightenment must become increasingly radical. Thinking resolves itself into unrestrained rationalism, which recognises as valid nothing that does not fall in with its processes of reasoning; it accordingly develops into a power of dissolution and dissipation, and becomes in particular the mortal enemy of historical tradition. For whatever ancient practices and customs it brings before its tribunal are already judged and condemned by the summons. If there is nothing constructive with which to offset this disintegrating process, life necessarily becomes more and more empty, and is steadily impelled toward a disastrous crisis.

Such a trend toward radical enlightenment is exhibited by the Sophists. A just appreciation of these teachers is rendered especially difficult by the fact that the principal account we have of them is transmitted by their severest critic, and that the conclusions which he draws may easily be mistaken for their own assertions. Above all, the Sophists were not theorists or pure philosophers, but teachers, teachers of a versatile cleverness in practical life, *i. e.*, in general conduct no less than in persuasive argument. Their aim was to fit their pupils to do something with success; they sought in particular to give them an advantage over other men by a thorough training in rhetoric and dialectic. These aims corresponded to a need of the times, and served to rouse and develop men's minds. But closely interwoven with what was valuable lay not a little that was questionable, indeed unsound. For the whole movement rested upon the conviction that there is no such thing as objective truth, that we are bound by no sort of universal order, that, on the contrary, everything depends upon the opinions and the interests of men. Thus man became "the measure of all things." This saying

may be differently interpreted, and may indeed be understood as an expression of a profound truth. But in circumstances where the accidental and the essential in man had not yet been distinguished, where a conception of humanity had not yet detached itself from its immediate manifestation in individuals, the phrase meant a renunciation of all universally valid standards, a surrender of truth to men's momentary caprice and fluctuating inclinations. In other words, it implied that everything may be turned this way or that, and differently judged, according to the point of view; that what appears as the right may be represented as the wrong, and conversely; and that any cause may be championed, according to the necessities of the case, or to one's whim. In this manner life is gradually degraded into a means of the profit, the self-indulgence, even the sport, of the single individual, who acknowledges no restraints, feels no respect, and scoffs at the laws as being mere statutes, as an invention of the weak, to which he opposes the power and advantage of the stronger as the real natural right. Thus the good yields to the profitable; all valuations become relative; nowhere does conviction find a secure foothold, nowhere does conduct find a goal that lifts man above himself, or that commands his respect. To be sure, such a doctrine of relativity also has a justification, and every philosophical view must give it due consideration. But raised to a sovereign position, it becomes the deadly enemy of everything great and true. Its dialectic will then inevitably disintegrate all solid foundations, its clever play destroy the seriousness and all the deep meaning of life: the subjective sense of power, and all the talk about power, less and less conceal the lack of genuine force, and the hollowness of the whole Sophistic structure. Finally, such shifty and flippant doings end in frivolity. Yet there is nothing which mankind tolerates less in the long run than a frivolous treatment of the chief problems of its happiness and its intellectual existence.

Still, it is easier to find fault with the Sophists than to transcend their position. The liberation of the individual subject does not admit of being simply revoked, for it has forever destroyed the

power of mere authority and tradition to carry conviction. The position can be surmounted only by an inner development of life, in which the subject discovers within himself new relationships and new laws, and finds rising in his own soul a spiritual world, which shall free man from arbitrary power and give him an inner stability. To have accomplished this is the greatest service rendered by Greek philosophy; and it also marks the highest point reached in its development.

The movement is started by Socrates. The character of his activity so closely resembles that of the Sophists in its outward aspect that, in the judgment of many of his contemporaries, he is simply to be classed with them. He too is active as a teacher, and seeks to prepare young men for life; he too argues and discusses; he too wants to establish everything before the bar of reason; for him also man is the chief object of interest: in short, he seems to be an "enlightener," like the rest. But, unlike them, he attains a stable position, from which all thought and life are transformed. To him is revealed an insight into the profound difference between the varied and changing opinions of men and the concepts of scientific thought. In these concepts there appears something fixed, immutable, universally valid; something which exerts a compelling influence, and excludes what is arbitrary. Thus the whole of life becomes a subject of investigation. For the aim now is, by the analysis and criticism of concepts, to test the whole content of human existence as to its validity, to dispel every illusion, and to reduce life and action to their true terms. In this effort, Socrates does not achieve the result of a completed system; his work remains a quest, a quest that ever begins anew. True, he devises special methods for the discovery and definition of concepts; yet he cannot apply them alone, but only in converse with other men, in regulated discourse. Hence his life and labour become a ceaseless dialogue. He remains in close touch with men, since his investigations are throughout concerned with the practical moral life. By establishing this life upon rational insight, the good is raised above the caprice of individual opinion, and a new conception of virtue



won. The vital thing now is not the outward performance, and the consequence for human society, but the inner conformity, the health and harmony of the soul. The inner life thus attains independence and individual worth; and it is so completely absorbed in itself that all questions of outward fortune fade into insignificance. The new ideas, indeed, are but imperfectly carried out; not a few aspects of the movement are trivial and pointless, and conflict with the main direction of effort. Nevertheless, the revelation and acceptance of the independence of the inner nature remain in full force; and whatever is incomplete and unreconciled sinks into insignificance before the truth and earnestness of Socrates's life-work, and particularly before the heroic death which put the seal upon that work. Thus a firmer foundation was laid, and a new path opened upon which, at the hands of Plato, the Greek view of life swiftly reached its philosophical zenith.

## II. PLATO

### (a) *Introductory*

To describe Plato's view of life is, indeed, the most difficult task of our whole undertaking. The principal reason for this is that the great personality, of which his works are the expression, includes fundamentally different, indeed conflicting, tendencies. Plato is above all the kingly thinker, penetrating beyond all appearance, and rising triumphantly above all figurative thought and speech to the invisible essence of things: with a transcendent power he sets worlds over against worlds, moves inert masses as with the lightest touch, and makes fluid the most stubborn of contradictions. But the great thinker is also by divine prerogative an artist, who is everywhere impelled to creative vision, who sketches powerful images with a convincing vividness, and whose versatile fantasy moulds all the work of thought into a thing of splendour. So powerful is the action of this fantasy, even in the inner structure of his work, that didactic statement and poetic myth often merge imperceptibly into one

another. But Plato's thought and poetry are the outpouring of a great moral personality, which is itself the supreme touchstone; and only that is accounted good and valuable which elevates the whole of the soul, and serves to strengthen, purify, and ennoble life. "All the gold above and beneath the earth does not outweigh virtue." Here a lofty mind banishes all that is impure and common; and the consciousness of the invisible bonds and the heavy responsibilities of human conduct lends to all effort a profound seriousness, indeed an unspeakable solemnity. Moreover, both the sentiment and the diction of Plato betray the influence of the new tendencies of the age toward an increasing inwardness in religion.

That such different forces meet and mutually accentuate each other in the life-work of Plato gives to it its unique greatness. But the same fact also gives rise to inconsistencies which are never completely reconciled. Each trait unfolds itself far too independently not to come into frequent conflict with the others; there are numerous interferences and cross-currents; the result is that the whole is developed, now more in this direction, now more in that.

In view of such a variety of conflicting tendencies, the obscurity which still veils both the chronological order of Plato's writings and the inner history of the man himself is particularly tormenting. Certain principal phases, indeed, stand out distinctly enough; but where the single divisions and transitions lie, what the chief motive of each of the different periods was, and what formed for the thinker himself the final conclusion of his long life's work—these points, notwithstanding the exhaustive researches of experts, are still so far from being decisively cleared up that it is even now impossible to do without the aid of bold conjectures. Such, however, must be avoided in this sketch, which accordingly will concern itself chiefly with the works in which Plato appears as the forerunner of Idealism. For in the Doctrine of Ideas Plato attains his greatest independence, while by it he has exerted his profoundest influence upon mankind.

*(b) The Doctrine of Ideas*

Plato's aims originate in a deep discontent, indeed in a complete rupture, with his social environment. Directly it is the Athenian democracy that excites his wrath, the behaviour, namely, of "the many," who without sincerity or insight, and impelled by vacillating desires and by caprice, pass judgment upon the weightiest matters, and by the influence of their noisy clamour divert those in pursuit of culture from their true aims. But, for the philosophical mind of Plato, the need of his own time and country expands into a problem of all lands and all ages. Every human undertaking which seeks to be self-sufficient, and to avoid all responsibility to superior authority, he looks upon as petty and necessarily inadequate. Dominated by a hollow show of independence, such efforts can never produce more than the appearance of virtue and happiness, which is rendered repulsive by its self-complacency. So the thinker turns his gaze away from men to the great All: from the affairs of everyday life, with its envy and hatred, he bids us look up to the ever-just order of the universe, which is constantly prefigured to our imagination in the serene expanse of the firmament. This relation with the universal order makes our life wider and truer, purer and more constant. Hence Plato seeks to rise above humanity, and to turn from a social to a cosmic regulation of life.

But the new life encounters at once an apparently insuperable difficulty. The sensible world was seen to be shattered and disintegrated by the work of science; especially was the mutability of its forms, the ceaseless flux of all things, far too distinctly recognised for life and aspiration to be safely based upon it. Hence, if the realm of the senses be the only world, all hope of finding a secure foundation for life by starting from the great All disappears. But can there not exist, beside it, above it, still another world? Socrates's doctrine of thinking and of the nature of concepts had, in fact, opened an outlook toward such a higher sphere. In concepts, as opposed to fluctuating opinions,



was recognised something fixed and universally valid. For Socrates, indeed, this universality appeared to be confined to the domain of human thought. But Plato, whose whole nature turned more toward the cosmic order, was led to take an important step forward. The concept, he contends, could not be true, unless it extended beyond human thought, and corresponded to a reality in things. This view is in harmony with the general attitude of the Greek mind, which does not sever man from the world and set him over against it, but unites him closely to it, interpreting whatever is found existing in human thought as a manifestation of things. The lesser life here follows the greater, since, according to Plato, the fire of the All does not kindle and nourish itself from our fire; rather, mine and thine and that of all living beings derive all that they have from the former. If, however, there is such a close relation between us and things, and the soul derives its possessions only through its community of nature with the All, then it is a sure inference from the content of the lesser world to that of the greater. Now in Plato's mind it is incontestable that, distinguished from shifting and uncertain opinions, there is such a thing as knowledge by permanent concepts: hence he concludes that there certainly exists in the All an invisible, immutable world, a realm of thought-entities beyond the fleeting world of sense.

In this manner, Plato comes to the core of his philosophical convictions, to the Doctrine of Ideas. The word *Idea*, originally meaning *appearance, image, shape*, and employed even in philosophy before Plato, received and retained from this time forth a technical sense; it now denotes in the world of things the counterpart of concept, an immutable essence or being, accessible only to thought. The Doctrine of Ideas gives stability and objectivity to our concepts: a bold logical fantasy here transfers the latter to the universe without, hypostatizing them into independent essences standing over against us. The world of thought which thus originates becomes for Plato the core of all reality, the bearer of the world of sense.

That is a revolution and a revaluation of the most radical

description: the intellectual history of man knows none greater. The world of the senses, hitherto the dwelling-place of the mind, retreats to a distance, and a world accessible only to thought becomes the first, the most certain, the immediately present world. The nearness and the knowableness of things are now measured by their transparency for thought, not by the strength of the sense impression. Since the sensible world, with its extension in space, offers an obstinate resistance to being resolved into pure concepts, it remains, with all its tangibility, in obscure twilight, while the Ideas enjoy the full light of day. With such a transformation, the soul constitutes our essential being, the body becomes something extraneous, even foreign. Likewise, only spiritual goods should now call forth our efforts.

But this spirituality acquires a peculiar character owing to the unqualified dominion of knowledge. Knowledge alone, that eye of the mind which beholds the invisible world, guides us away from the illusion of the senses to the realm of reality. On its development hangs the independence and inwardness of our lives; indeed, in strictness, it must form life's sole content.

The result is a complete change, but also one which is in danger of an extremely one-sided development. Were life turned wholly into the spiritual channel, the varied fulness of actual existence would be sacrificed to the desire for a completely immaterial and immutable being. Plato, however, adds the complement of an artistic tendency, as being no less essential to a stable and worthy existence; thus a desire for beauty is joined to the desire for knowledge, and the Doctrine of Ideas is completed only by the union of the two. The insensible essence of things appears also as pure form, the form which, by its superior power, binds together the manifold phenomena, and, as contrasted with the ephemeral existence of individual things, endures as with an eternal youth, and ever afresh exerts its formative power over the sensible world. Such a Form Plato finds active throughout nature, as well as in the inner life of the soul and in the upbuilding of human society; hence we may say that the world-wide phenomenon of Form is here for the first

time grasped by thought, and also that there is now won a new valuation of the world of things. Form is not only constant, it is also beautiful and attractive. Accordingly, true being reveals itself also as the Good and the Ideal, the world of essence also as that of worth. Thus, immediate existence takes on a far more congenial aspect. It becomes indeed a copy of the perfect prototype, directing man's thoughts steadily toward the latter, and producing an unceasing aspiration.

This union of truth and beauty implies a firm conviction of the universal power of reason. Where the essence of things is also beautiful and good, where things are viewed as better in the proportion that they partake of being, there the Good has a sure preponderance, there it enjoys a sovereign rule over the world. No place remains for radical evil, for a paralysing original sin: evil tendencies, indeed, may degrade and pervert, but they cannot corrupt and ruin. So directed, the eager desire for life is ennobled and justified, and, in spite of all the dangers and conflicts, a happy mood results.

However much that is problematic may remain in Plato's Doctrine of Ideas, the latter discloses a great truth which we cannot relinquish. And that is the recognition of the fact that there is a realm of truth beyond the likes and dislikes of men; that truths are valid, not because of our consent, but independently of it, and in a sphere raised above all human opinion and power. Such a conviction is the foundation of the independence of science, and of the secure upbuilding of civilisation; only a self-dependent truth can provide laws and norms, which elevate human existence because they unite it. But this is the central thought of all idealism; hence the latter ever remains linked with the name of Plato.

### (c) *Life's Goods*

The Platonic view of the conduct of life follows directly from the Doctrine of Ideas. Its characteristics may be summarised in a few words. All intellectual life rests upon trained insight;

without this, it speedily falls a victim to error. But in its actual working out, life tends to shape itself according to the artistic principles of symmetry and harmony. Thus, the two chief tendencies in Greek civilisation, the insistence upon definiteness of knowledge and upon comeliness of form, here unite with and interpenetrate each other to their mutual furtherance. Accordingly, Plato represents the highest point reached in the intellectual labours of his people. At the same time, in his creative work he pours forth the whole greatness of his mind, the force of a pure and noble and sovereign personality, and so contributes something new and individual to the national development: in all the search for truth and beauty, his mighty soul is really seeking for the good, the ennobling, whatever elevates the whole nature.

Knowledge is the undisputed guide of life. Nothing can be accepted as valid which has not passed through the crucible of thought. Intelligent insight alone renders virtue genuine, since it alone penetrates beyond appearances and emancipates us from the hollow conformity of conventional morality; it alone establishes virtue in the individual nature of the man, and makes his acts really free. For that which is generally called virtue, but which in truth is not very different from physical accomplishments, is more a product of social environment, more a result of custom and habit, than one's own act and decision. It is right insight which first makes possible the independence of conduct and of the inner nature.

The beautiful likewise must be baptised in the element of thought, in order that it may be purged of the common view which is intent on low pleasure. For it is thought that removes from the beautiful all that serves merely for sensuous charm and gratification; and it is only when freed from what is carnal, only when it rises to pure spirituality, that beauty perfects its nature. It is here that Winckelmann's words: "like a spirit drawn forth from matter through fire," find application. Thus the Greek striving for beauty finds expression also in philosophy and becomes a power even in the world of scientific thought.



Just as beauty is inseparably bound up with the search for truth, so it is with the Good. In Plato, philosophy is no mere theory, in the later sense of the word, but a rehabilitation of the whole being, an elevation of the entire man from appearance to truth, an awakening out of the deep sleep that holds ordinary life captive, a purification from all sensuousness and its lower impulses. The striving toward the world of essential being springs from the innermost will of the whole man; it is an impulse of veracity, which means breaking with appearance and seeking the reality. Truth and goodness meet also in another respect, inasmuch as immutable being here counts as the highest good, yet such being is revealed only through the search for truth. Finally, according to Plato, the Idea of the Good, the highest of all Ideas, affords guidance in the search for truth, in so far as it teaches us to interpret all that happens in accordance with ends, and thus becomes the key to the whole of reality.

Still closer is the bond between the Good and the Beautiful: it is operative in all the departments of life with a force that surmounts all obstacles. Plato's treatment of the beautiful shows him to be in close touch with his people, since he gives a philosophical version of that classic beauty which had just then attained its zenith. The beautiful is here principally of the plastic sort; it requires a distinct separation of the manifold elements, strength in the moulding of each, and concentration toward a powerful unity of effect. Hence typical classical beauty is a beauty of fixed relations and clear proportions, of definite and vivid form, and yet one which is full of inner life.

Beauty of this description the penetrating glance of the thinker discerns beneath the sombre appearance of things, both in the great world and in the sphere of human activity; limits and order, symmetry and harmony, are everywhere revealed to him. So, from out the deep vault of the heavens, the fixed constancy of the stars, notwithstanding their ceaseless movements; so from out the inner mechanism of nature, the formation of everything in accordance with strict mathematical relations.

But what thus goes on in the great world with far-reaching and

certain effect becomes in human life a problem to be wrought out by action: the most important of all harmonies is the harmony of life, of which the Hellenic nature alone seems to be capable. Our being, indeed, with its multitude of impulses, is necessarily forced into metes and bounds. But the full realisation of symmetry in the details of life requires our personal initiative, under the guidance of right insight. The problem is, with the help of such insight, to dispel the original confusion, to develop all our native endowments, to prevent them from encroaching upon one another, and finally to unite all attainments into a well-balanced life-work. Here everything limitless and indefinite is excluded, all movement has a fixed goal, even efficiency may not be arbitrarily increased. When each performs his individual task, the whole fares the best, life becomes beautiful in itself and can produce nothing but happiness. Such a conviction implies its own ideal of education. A man should not train himself for everything, and undertake everything. Rather let each choose some single aim, and dedicate to that his whole strength. It is far better to do one thing well than many things indifferently. In other words, it is an aristocratic ideal in harsh and conscious opposition to the democratic one of an education of all for everything, that is, a training as many-sided and uniform for everybody as possible.

Inasmuch as the harmony of life thus virtually becomes our own creation, by incorporating in it our volition, our disposition, it develops into an ethical product, into the virtue of justice. For justice consists precisely in this, to perform one's own task and to render to every one his due; instead of encroaching upon another's sphere, to devote one's self wholly to the work which nature and fortune have assigned to one. Accordingly, justice is nothing other than the harmony of life incorporated into one's own volition. As such, it becomes for Plato, in common with the Greek people, the central conception of the moral life, the all-inclusive virtue. Beyond the human sphere, moreover, it is active as the moral order of the universe. In the end, we fare according to our conduct; if not in this life, then certainly in



another, the good done must receive its reward, and the evil its punishment.

If, accordingly, virtue consists in the vitalising and harmonious ordering of one's own being, it becomes wholly self-dependent; and the effort to attain virtue becomes a ceaseless occupation of the man with his own inner life, and consequently a liberation from all the oppression of social surroundings. The prescriptions of custom had a peculiar power over the southern nations; but since the time of Plato there is to be found even there in all sovereign personalities the most strenuous resistance to its pressure. With the spiritualising of the aim, the chief end became, not gratifying the expectations of other men, but meeting the demands of one's own ideals; not the appearing, but the being, good. Just as this turning to the inner nature first made life independent and honest, so it promised an incomparably more exalted happiness, a purer joy. The forceful and virile nature of Plato is not the one to renounce happiness; yet Plato does not find it, as do the masses, in outward events and successes. Rather, seeking it in activity itself enables him to undertake a great life-work in developing the inner nature. What is required is first to fill the entire circuit of life's activities with eager aspiration, and then to unite all into a harmony. On the result depends the success or failure of life, and also our happiness or unhappiness. For, according to Plato, whatever harmony or discord there is in life will be clearly perceived and actually felt, will be felt just as it exists, without illusion. Hence the actual state of the soul is truthfully reflected in joy or sorrow; justice with its harmony yields blessedness, a form of happiness exalted far above all other kinds; viciousness, on the other hand, with its discord, its disruption and hostility toward our real nature, produces unbearable suffering.

This inseparable connection between active virtue and happiness forms the highest development of the wisdom of an active and happy race: such is the ideal for which Greek philosophy fought to the last. According to this conviction, happiness forms the natural consequence, but not the motive of action;

where the good has its worth in itself, in its own inner beauty, the perception of which always delights and fascinates, there all petty concern about rewards vanishes. To give happiness this inner foundation means to break the power of destiny over men. All the privations and antagonisms of outward circumstances cannot alter the condition of soul created by the soul's own act; its superiority and self-sufficiency are only strengthened and made more obvious by the contrast. Possessed of all the favour of fortune, the bad man remains miserable; indeed, prosperity renders him only the more wretched, since evil flourishes more rankly in a rich soil: but to the good man, the inner splendour of his life is first fully revealed in the presence of obstacles and suffering. Holding such convictions, Plato draws an impressive picture of the suffering just man, who is pursued until his death by the apparent injustice that afflicts him, but whose inner nobility shines with transcendent lustre in the midst of trial—a picture which in its outward approach to Christian ideas only renders more obvious the inner divergence between the two worlds.

(d) *Asceticism and the Transfiguration of the World*

Absolutely essential to the Platonic view was the separation between the realm of truth, as that of pure forms, and the realm of immediate existence. Between these there is an impassable gulf; historical research has failed to lessen the separation. The more energetically Plato insists that spiritual goods have their worth within themselves, and that that worth is incomparable, the more certain he becomes that they constitute a realm of their own opposed to a world of lesser truth and completeness. What consequences for human conduct has such a rigorous separation of the ideal from the actual? Can conduct embrace both, or should it be directed exclusively toward the ideal? The latter course is unconditionally enjoined by Plato. For why should we divide our energies, when the world of real being demands our unreserved devotion? why concern ourselves with the transitory, when the way to the eternal stands open? why

linger in obscure twilight amid shadowy reflections, when we may gaze upon the full pure light of the archetypes? Plato is impelled in this direction by his eager longing for essential being: measured by the constancy and simplicity of reality, the sense-world, with its myriad shifting forms, sinks into a deceptive appearance. Hence it becomes the problem of problems to free oneself wholly from this illusion, and to dedicate all love, all strength, and all effort to immutable being. In this manner Plato develops a type of asceticism which is individual and distinctive.

Viewed from this elevation, the worthlessness and falsity of the life that immediately surrounds us is obvious. It is not so much that it is defective in detail, as that it fails as a whole, and particularly as to its basis. Here where sensuousness draws everything down to its own level, there is no such thing as pure happiness; everything noble is distorted and perverted, all effort is directed to the appearance and not to the thing itself, while the ceaseless change of phenomena yields at no point a lasting good. Into the dark cave of sensuousness, to which we are here banished, the great and luminous world of truth throws but faint and fleeting images. If thought opens to us a way of escape from such bondage, ought we not joyfully to enter upon it? ought we not courageously to cast off every tie that binds us to the realm of shadows? But everything that is there prized as a good holds us fast—beauty, riches, strength of body, distinguished connections; hence the real friend of truth must inwardly renounce even these. To the soul the body is a prison, indeed a grave. It can rescue itself only by putting away all pleasure and desire, pain and fear. For these passions weld it to the body, and cause it to mistake the world of sense-appearance for the true world. Yet the soul cannot free itself from the passions, so long as the events of everyday life possess the slightest value for it, for then they rule it; consequently it must rise to complete indifference to them, and find happiness exclusively in intellectual activity, *i. e.*, in the knowledge of true being. The blows of fortune glance from a wise and brave soul that partici-

pates in immutable goods. "It is best to remain composed and not to be excited in the presence of misfortunes, inasmuch as neither in such matters are good and evil easily discerned, nor does he who takes disaster hard gain anything thereby, nor in general does anything in human affairs merit great eagerness." And we ought not to grieve like women over the calamities of others, but manfully to help the sick and set the fallen upon his feet. Only he attains a complete victory who leaves the whole life of sensation behind him, and lifts himself heroically above the world of joys and sorrows. With such a release of life from the thralldom of sensuous existence, death loses all its terrors; it becomes an "escape from all error and unreason and fear and wild passion and all other human ills." To the disembodied soul alone is the full truth revealed, for only what is pure may come into contact with the pure. Thus the escape from the earthly, the preparation for death, becomes the chief problem of philosophy; it now means the awaking out of dazed dreaming into perfect clearness, a return from a strange land to one's home.

Here we have asceticism in the full sense of the word. There remains, indeed, a wide divergence between the Platonic and the mediæval asceticism. It is only the sensuous and merely human existence, not the world in general, that is surrendered; and the eternal being that is the object of striving is not located in the distant Beyond as an object of faith and hope, but it surrounds the soul of kindred nature even in this life with an immediate presence; also it does not appear as the gracious gift of a higher power, but as a result of one's own activity, as a product of human freedom.

But even with such an interpretation, the break with the whole immediate condition of mankind remains. For with the rejection of all the pains and joys, all the cares and problems of humanity, existence threatens to lose all living content, the infinite wealth of being to sink into the abyss of a formless eternity.

In such asceticism as this, we have the true Plato and the consistent Plato, but by no means the whole Plato. For the ascetic



tendency in Plato underwent a considerable modification, in fact it suffered a complete reaction, as has happened indeed with all exponents of asceticism who, in their concern for the individual, did not forget the claims of humanity in general. The individual thinker, it is true, may cut himself off from the sensuous world, but mankind as a whole cannot follow him: thus regard for the weaker brethren would have sufficed of itself to lead Plato back to the sensuous world. Hence a concession which, in the Orient, and often even on Christian soil, was only a reluctant one, found Plato predisposed in its favour. As a Greek, and as the friend, indeed the discoverer, of beauty, so far as theoretical knowledge is concerned, he is bound by a thousand ties to the actual world; and that fact compels him to search out the good in the sensuous also, and to rejoice in it.

In particular, an effort peculiar to Plato, to insert an intermediate link between the spiritual and the sensuous, between reality and appearance, between the eternal and the transitory, operates to exalt the sensuous world, and so to preserve life from disruption. That is, the soul appears as a mediation between the spirit and the sensuous nature, in that it receives the eternal truths from the former, but lives its life in the latter; within the soul itself, strenuous effort mediates between the intellectual faculties and the senses, and, in cognition, correct opinion mediates between knowledge and ignorance. Similarly, in the theories of the state and of nature, opposites are connected by intermediate links, and all the phenomena arranged in a graded series. Finally, the beautiful becomes a connecting link between pure spirit and the sensuous world, inasmuch as order, proportion, and harmony dominate both worlds, and give also to the latter a share in divinity.

With Plato, however, the union of higher and lower results not only from an impartation from above, but also from the direct aspiration of the sensuous and human toward the divine. Throughout the whole finite world there stirs the longing for some share in the good and the eternal, in order that the finite itself may become imperishable. Love, or Eros, is nought but

such a striving for immortality. This longing attains full development only in the pursuit of knowledge, which leads to a perfect union with the true and the eternal. Yet it pervades the whole universe in an ascending progress, and the contemplation of the thinker joyfully traces this mounting stairway of love.

Such a transformation increases the significance of the immediate world and augments the wealth of human life. Knowledge no longer forms its exclusive content, but only the dominating height which sheds forth light and reason in all directions. But the lower sphere acquires worth as being an indispensable step toward that height; for our eyes can accustom themselves but gradually to the light of the Ideas. Moreover, the Idea of justice and harmony uplifts the lower sphere by making it a part of the whole, and by setting it a special task whose accomplishment becomes essential to the completion of the whole work, both in the human soul and in the state. That sphere becomes evil only when the order is reversed, and the higher supplanted; hence, even the sensuous is no longer as such to be condemned, but only in its excess and when it subjugates the mind.

To this there corresponds a different personal attitude toward human things; the thinker cannot now look coldly down upon them from a distant height. Rather he shares feelingly in the common lot: all good becomes his joy, all evil his pain. Hence he is impelled with a mighty force toward the furtherance of the good and the combating of evil. The ascetic thinker becomes a bold and passionate reformer; he devises vast plans for the radical amelioration of human conditions, and does not shrink from abrupt changes. Instead of the earlier suppression of the emotions, we are now told that without a noble anger nothing excellent can be accomplished. Plato here appears as an ardent champion, whom the battle with its excitement stirs to joyful enthusiasm, only the more since, in his view, the Deity ever leads the combat.

Accordingly, Platonism embraces at once asceticism and a transfiguration of the world. But the latter, too, is a consequence of the world of Ideas; for even the reason in the immediate world



is descended from the Ideas. So, in spite of the cleavage, life remains directed toward one chief goal: in both worlds, all good is spiritual in nature, all reason derived from right insight. That, however, everything has not been reconciled, that in the common stream there remain conflicting currents, is indicated, not to mention other points, by the discrepant treatment of the emotions. But perhaps the blame for the contradiction should not fall upon Plato alone; perhaps there reside in human life in general impulses toward opposite goals. Can we attain the independence and original purity of intellectual life without breaking away from experience? Can we develop and perfect it without returning to experience? However that may be, it has not been those thinkers who have hastily seized upon a simple unity and fortified their position against all possible contradictions who have exerted the profoundest influence, but those who have allowed the different tendencies to conflict strongly with one another and to expend themselves fully: by this means they have started a self-accelerating movement, an inner forward impulse of life. Who would deny that such has been the case with Plato?

(e) *The View of Human Life as a Whole*

All the principal aspects of Plato's thought coalesce in his comprehensive view of human existence. The chief antithesis of the two worlds applies also to man, who consists of body and soul, or rather appears to do so. In truth, the soul alone constitutes the self, to which the body is only externally appended. The soul shares in the world of eternal being and pure beauty, while the body draws us down to the sensuous realm, and subjects us to its vicissitudes. So conceived, the immortality of the soul is beyond all doubt. If the essence of life lies beyond all temporal change and all relation to surroundings, and immutability is the chief characteristic of spiritual existence, then must the soul, each individual soul, belong to the eternal elements of reality. It never came into being, and cannot pass away. Its

connection with the body appears as a mere episode in its life, indeed as the result of guilt, of an "intellectual Fall" (Rohde); and the serious work of life is designed to free it from the consequences of this guilt, and finally to bring it, although after manifold transmigrations, back to the invisible world.

Plato's powerful development of these convictions has exerted the profoundest influence upon mankind. It was not the average intelligence of his surroundings that provided him with a belief in the immortality of the soul. For the old idea of a shadowy existence of souls in Hades—fundamentally different from that of a true immortality—still held sway over men's minds: even for a Socrates immortality was a moot question. True, in smaller religious circles, belief in immortality had taken root, but rather as a subjective conviction than as part of a comprehensive system of thought. Plato was the first to make the belief the central point in a view of the world, and to connect it with the whole of human striving.

The principal direction of human effort is also herewith determined. For all thought is now concentrated upon the inner state of man, upon the liberation and purifying of the immortal soul. Life attains in fact a thoroughly spiritual character; and the pursuit of truth demands our utmost exertion only the more because the material world encompasses us with the deceptive appearance of truth, and our souls are as if covered up and buried, and our faculty of knowledge weakened and dimmed, by the sensuous. So a complete inversion of the ordinary view is necessary: in an abrupt break with his first state, let man turn his spiritual eye and even his whole being away from gloomy darkness to the light of truth. The movement of life, like all training and education, does not develop from mere experience; nor does progress arise from the mere contact of inner and outer; rather, active effort is a recollection of the true nature of the mind, a return to the real, ever-present, merely obscured nature. For the soul must have brought with it into this life a spiritual capital, which was to abide as an imperishable possession. Hence the well-known doctrine of reminiscence and innate

(better, native) Ideas, which, notwithstanding all that is problematic in its nearer definition, is unassailable in the fundamental conception that all true living is an unfolding of one's own being, and that the external world can only arouse, but not create, mental activity and particularly knowledge. The attempt to impart genuine insight and virtue by means of the influence of custom and practice Plato likens to the effort to confer sight upon the blind externally. All knowledge in the end is drawn, not from experience, but from the eternal nature of the mind. "Individual things are specimens which remind us of the abstract concepts, but they are not the reality to which those concepts refer." (Zeller.)

Intimately connected with this view of life's problem are certain convictions regarding the actual conduct of life. Individuals there are, in Plato's belief, who really devote themselves to true being; genuine virtue—such, in fact, is the common assertion of the Greek thinkers—really exists among men. But such individuals constitute the rare exceptions; the great majority cling to the world of illusion, and mistake the nature of the good. The contrast between sterling and worthless men is here felt more acutely than are their common problems and common destiny; in fact, a conspicuous separation of the noble from the vulgar appears indispensable to the maintenance of the moral order. But when it is said that the multitude, because of its propensity for sensuous enjoyment, approaches the manner of life of animals, while the sage in his contemplation of the eternal world leads a life akin to the divine, all ties between them threaten to dissolve, and mankind to be separated into two completely unrelated classes. And, indeed, permanently so. For here every sort of faith in an intellectual and moral progress is wanting. As in the universe, so also in human life, the relation of good and evil is regarded as in the main unalterable. The sensuous, the source of all the hindrance, is abiding; and the positive opposition between the sensuous and the spiritual, between the fleeting world of change and immutable being, permits of no faith in any sort of real progress. But that does not

mean doing away with all movement and readjustment in human affairs. Plato accounts for these, in agreement with older thinkers, by the assumption of cycles, great world-epochs, which were first known to astronomy. After completing their circuit, things come round again to the starting-point, and then repeat the same course *ad infinitum*: thus historical movement is resolved into an endless series of cycles having like contents. And this order amid change is presented as a picture of eternity. Hence here we have no historical development with its hopes and prospects; here there is no appeal from the evils of the present to a better future.

Accordingly, the Platonic view of the conduct of life is deficient in a number of motives which the modern man regards as indispensable. On the other hand, many cares and doubts are unknown to it; and the spiritual nature of man, his kinship with the Deity, here offers an abundant compensation for all the defects of average existence. The virtuous man can escape from the dim twilight of human relations, and fill his soul with the pure light. If he puts forth his utmost effort, the high aim is indeed attainable. For Plato recognises no impassable gulf between the striving mind and the truth, no erring on the part of him who earnestly seeks: the thinking that follows the right method is infallible. Just as the innermost secrets of things can be penetrated by a powerful and courageous act of thought, so such thinking exercises control over all conduct and feeling. True knowledge makes the whole life rational; there is no radical evil which could prevent such progress. So each moment an inspiring present may be won, and life be lifted above all the defects of the sensuous sphere to a state of stability and gladness. Activity is ever the source of well-being; but since all human initiative is firmly rooted in the kinship of our nature with eternal being and perfect beauty, such activity, notwithstanding its heroic uplift, engenders no stormy excitement nor confusing unrest.

Let us now pursue these convictions in their application to the various departments of life.



(f) *The Several Departments of Life*

## (a) RELIGION

Plato's nature is deeply religious in the sense that the dependence of man upon the universe, which pervades all his work, both finds full recognition in his positive convictions and appears transmuted into the intimacy of feeling. His thought is permeated with the belief that a "kingly mind" rules the universe. Even his diction, which is replete with expressions borrowed from religion and worship, shows how profoundly he feels that he is surrounded by the working of a divine power. But the religion of Plato remains to the end the religion of a Greek thinker; and between this and the Christian religion there exists a wide chasm. For to the Greek, religion is not a deliverance from direst extremity, not the restitution of the disturbed, even destroyed, union with the Deity, not the consolation of the helpless and the weak. Rather, to him, the secure relationship with the divine which exists by nature is not so shattered by waywardness that it cannot be restored by human agency at any moment. Furthermore, religion is here so identified with every form of activity that it enhances the importance of human life and gives grandeur to all its relations. The consciousness of being protected and supported in the battle of life by the Deity, fills the mind of the sage with deep piety. Yet this religion does not create a world of its own, and accordingly does not form any special sphere opposed to ordinary life. Likewise, it does not give rise to a spiritual community, or anything that could be called a personal relationship; and no uplifting and inner renewal of life results from the exercise of the divine sway.

Consequently no need is felt of a special historical revelation, in distinction from the general manifestation of the divine in the universe and in human nature. Just as little is there any need felt for a religious doctrine, a theology;

Greek piety accords perfectly with a distinct consciousness of the great distance between God and man. The immutable and pure must not be drawn into the impure sphere of sensuous change; only by means of intermediate steps can it communicate itself to the lower realm; God does not mingle with men. Hence Plato's saying: "God, the father and creator of the universe, is difficult to find, and, when found, impossible to impart to all."

This religion of active, healthy, strong men follows, in its further development, the twofold direction of Plato's work. To the metaphysician, the search for truth is itself the true religion. God means the absolutely immutable and simple Being, from whom all unchangeableness and simplicity, but also all truth, are derived: He is the measure of all things. It is when man turns from the broken reflection to the pure source of all light, that his life is guided from appearance to truth.

In the other direction, God is the ideal of moral perfection, the completely just and good Spirit. To become like God means to be intelligently pious and just; piety, however, is nothing else than justice toward the Deity, the fulfilment of the whole obligation due to the Godhead. The central point of this conviction is the conception of the moral order of the world, of a full retribution for good and evil. But, while thus adopting the fundamental conception of the Greek religion, Plato broadens and deepens it. In the opinion of the people, retribution was to be expected in this world; if it did not fall upon the individual, it would fall upon his house. Plato, too, looked for justice in this life; but its complete triumph he believed would come only in the Beyond. He developed the conception of a judgment after death, which would be a judgment of the soul in its nakedness, and would be incorruptible in its verdict; and the marvellous power of his delineation has engraved this picture upon the imagination of mankind for all time. But it is not Plato's intention to direct the thoughts of men mainly beyond the grave. Of the dead, we ought to think that they have passed



away, after their work is ended and their mission fulfilled; but for ourselves we must give heed to the present.

The Platonic justice never passes into severity; it is tempered with mercy. Nevertheless, it always stands before love, and the moral realm here appears as a world-state ruled by the Deity—a view which profoundly influenced later times, including Christianity.

That Plato in this particular does not abandon so much as develop the popular belief is of a piece with that other fact that, notwithstanding his energetic defence of a unity dominating the world, he does not surrender the plurality of divine forces, but, by teaching the immanence of the life of nature, transplants the mythological conception to the soil of philosophy. But wherever the popular views contradict the purified notions of philosophy, Plato does not shrink from making vigorous protest, nor even from open hostility. He rejects all that is ignoble and unworthy in the customary representations of the gods; he rejects with even greater indignation a form of worship which, instead of inculcating an approach to the Deity by means of good deeds and moral worth, teaches the purchase of His favour by outward observances, sacrifices, and the like, and thus shamefully degrades religion to the level of a traffic. Only small men, only weaklings, will make use of such means; in reality it is the man of action who may be certain of the divine help: the thought of the Deity, which is a terror to the evil-doer fills the former with glad anticipations.

### (β) THE STATE

Plato's ascetic tendency implies a decidedly negative attitude toward the state. Where the immediate world is a thing of change and illusion, where, moreover, a mind immersed in intellectual pursuits finds itself out of sympathy with its social surroundings, there political life can hardly appear as an attractive field for co-operation. None the less, the state strongly attracts Plato; and the fact bears ample testimony to the force

with which he is recalled from the world of abstract thought to an active interest in the community. In reality, political theory occupies a large place in Plato's world of thought; and the principal stages in his inner development are reflected in its successive ideals.

The latest view, which is contained in "The Laws," may here be disregarded, since, notwithstanding the wisdom of many individual utterances, it possesses too little completeness. On the other hand, the two views of the state which "The Republic" presents must be considered.

In the first, we find Plato an energetic reformer of the Greek state, along the line of an enlargement of the Socratic doctrine. The state is treated—with a sustained analogy to the individual soul—as exhibiting the ideal of justice writ large. To this end, all its affairs, and particularly education, should be regulated in strict accordance with the laws of ethics; the principal functions of society should be definitely distinguished, in conformity with the stages of soul life, and represented by the activity of fixed classes; each individual should perform his special task with whole-souled devotion, yet all should work together under the reign of intelligence toward one harmonious result. In order not to be drawn away from the service of the common end by private interests, the higher classes must relinquish private property and family ties; hence communism on ethical, not economic, grounds forms the keystone of the Platonic theory.

Thus the state becomes an ethical ideal, an empire of virtue based upon insight. Drawn in bold lines, this picture appears at first to present a sharp contrast to reality; closer inspection, however, reveals a number of threads of connection between the daring speculations of the thinker and actual Greek conditions. For at this time Plato still believed in the possibility of great reforms in the institutions of Greece.

The later sketch of the state surrenders this hope. The longing for the realm of immutable being has in the end so estranged the thinker from the conditions of human existence

that he looks back upon life as he might upon a gloomy cavern seen from a lofty elevation. If, nevertheless, he returns thither, he does so, not to please himself, but for the sake of the brethren, and less in the hope of any result than in order even there to proclaim the eternal truths. The state which originates from this attitude is above all an institution for the preparation of men for the realm of eternal truth; here the task is, by an orderly ascent, gradually to free the soul from the sensuous, and win it over to the supersensuous; thus the whole of life becomes a stern education, a spiritual purification; and this education gradually raises man to a world in the presence of which all political life vanishes. By means of the state itself there results an emancipation from the sphere to which the state belongs.

Thus the two views are not only different but incompatible. Yet, in spite of the disagreement, there are important features which are common to both, and which give to the Platonic state a unity of character. In both, the state is man magnified; all authority rests with superior intelligence; spiritual and moral goods are the principal content of the life of the state; the individual is everywhere subordinated to the whole. Without an elimination of individual initiative and the establishment of irrevocable ordinances, the state cannot enter into the service of reason. But this permanence of conditions and strict subordination of the individual Plato demands at the same moment that he raises human personality high above the state, subjects traditional conditions to a searching criticism, and devises the boldest schemes for complete reconstruction. Accordingly, he demands for the philosopher a privilege which he denies to the rest of mankind: the state ought to receive a content free from all subjective opinion, yet it must receive it through the mental labour of the sovereign personality. This contradiction alone was sufficient to prevent Plato's doctrine from exercising the slightest contemporary influence: such valuable suggestions and fruitful seeds as it contained were forced to await for their appreciation entirely different conditions.

## (γ) ART

Plato's labours on behalf of art and of the state illustrate the irony of fate. He expended upon the state, a subject foreign to his innermost nature, an incalculable amount of trouble, while art, to which the deepest chords of his being responded, failed of an adequate theoretical consideration. In fact, the very thinker who, more than any other, was an artist in his thinking, heaped accusation after accusation upon art. The metaphysical and ethical sides of his nature conspired against the artistic. As, in his view, a mere imitation of the sensuous, a copy of the copy, art retreats to the farthest distance from essential being. The varied and changing forms for which art, particularly the drama, demands our sympathetic interest, are only a hindrance, since one's own individual rôle in life offers quite enough for consideration. Offensive also is the impure content of the poetry dominated by mythological ideas; finally, the feverish excitement of the emotional life, which Plato sees taking possession of the art of his time, is highly objectionable. In all this we miss a proper æsthetic valuation of art: such an estimate was rendered peculiarly difficult for a Greek thinker by the intimate connection of art with the ethical and religious life of the nation. Hence there followed a severe conflict; in spite of personal sympathy, whatever endangered the moral welfare had to go. Entire species of art, such as the drama, are rejected without qualification; what remains must conform unconditionally to the requirements of morals. In this conflict between ethical and æsthetic interests, morals win an unqualified victory. Still, for Plato, the subordination of art does not mean any depreciation of beauty. For him, there is a way from the evils of human conduct to the beauty of the universe. And, just as in the cosmos, the good allies itself with beauty, with a severe and chaste beauty, so also the search for truth, the work of science, receives an artistic form. In other words, the structure of science itself becomes the highest and truest work of art.



## (δ) SCIENCE

Science as understood by Plato is radically different from modern science. It does not seek for the minutest elements in order to construct the real world out of their combination; rather, it embraces all phenomena from the first in a single view; explanation proceeds from the greater to the less, from the whole to the part; synthesis governs analysis. "To see things together," to recognise relationships—that is for Plato the chief characteristic of the philosopher, whose peculiar greatness lies in creative intuition.

Similarly, Platonic science is not, like modern science, a translation of existence into terms of a gradual evolution, an explanation of being by change; on the contrary, its aim is to find eternal being amid fleeting change, a perfectly ordered cosmos amid the chaos of the phenomenal world. But, finding the essence is not so much a matter of long and tedious labour as it is an act of insight; mental power transports us to the realm of truth at a stroke. Here science is free from the gnawing doubt that otherwise attacks it at the very root. Only thus can it provide a support to life and fill it with a joyful confidence.

In this view of knowledge, all the emphasis falls upon the fundamental questions, and the subordinate sciences are regarded merely as preliminaries to philosophy. Only mathematics, as the science which conducts us from the sensuous to the supersensuous, receives full recognition. On the other hand, all concern with the varied content of the sensible world appears of small worth, and any assertion regarding it merely as a more or less plausible assumption. Moreover, all interpretation of nature proceeds from the soul, which is also the ground of all motion in the universe. By the vigorous development of such convictions, Plato did serious injury to the pursuit of natural science: a network of subjective notions here overspread the actual world, and prevented an unbiassed estimate of things in their natural relations; as a consequence, the important begin-



nings of an exact knowledge of nature contained in the pre-Socratic philosophy were lost for more than two thousand years. The strong point in Plato's achievement lies in the pure philosophy of concepts, the dialectic, which accepts nothing from without, and even gives a full justification of its own bases. Here there is consummated a triumphant emancipation of thought from all material bonds; while a complete confidence of the mind in its own faculties is taught by example. When Plato calls the dialectic method "the highest gift of the gods, and the true Promethean fire," such an estimate possesses for him the fullest personal truth.

(g) *Retrospect*

The most important and most fruitful in results of all Plato's achievements is undoubtedly the basing of human activity and the whole structure of civilisation upon theoretical knowledge: it meant a new inner stability of life and a substantial elevation of our existence. But we saw that the granting of such prominence to theoretical knowledge by no means entailed the dwarfing of the remaining forms of man's activity; on the contrary, all the chief directions of human labour were permitted to develop without obstruction and mutually to strengthen and further one another. As the various aspects of Plato's mind were bound together by the powerful, broad personality of the man, so all the diverging tendencies of his own life inevitably again converged and united themselves into a single life-work. In later times, indeed, the diverging currents of man's activity flowed further apart, and forbade so complete a reunion. Yet this subsequent tendency toward specialisation makes the life and labour of Plato only the more valuable. For the latter present vividly to our minds that unity of a many-sided activity which he attained, and which even we may not surrender, although now it rises before us only as a remote ideal. So, in general, antiquity regarded many aims as speedily attainable, which in the course of history have ever displayed new complications and ever re-

ceded further from us: should we, therefore, look upon them as worthless?

Plato represents the zenith of the intellectual development of Greece. Its two chief tendencies, the desire for knowledge and the sense for form, the scientific and the artistic impulses, found in him their most intimate union and most fruitful mutual interaction. His view of life brought the characteristic Greek idealism to its most clearly defined expression. Its peculiar type consists in the inextricable interweaving of these convictions: that the indomitable work of thought discloses a new world of true being and genuine happiness, that this world is in ceaseless conflict with the actual world and can never fully overcome its resistance, that, however, in its own inexhaustible life it remains superior to all assaults, and by its immutable truth and beauty it lifts men securely above the sphere of strife and suffering. The kinship of this view of life with that later developed by Christianity is as unmistakable as is their wide divergence within the same limits. In both, the aim is to gain a higher world; but in Plato true insight is the way thither, in Christianity purity of heart; in both, the Deity is at work in human affairs; but with Plato the divine is operative equally at all times and in all places, in nature as well as among men, while Christianity shows the divine revelation as culminating at a single point in human history, and hence arrives at the doctrine of an historical development, a thing unknown to Plato, and something which he must necessarily have rejected.

The inexhaustible influence of the great idealist of Greece is due quite as much to the spontaneous life animating all his work as to the diverse tendencies which freely unfold and culminate in him. Throughout the whole course of history Plato's philosophy has acted as a powerful stimulus to men's minds, resisting every tendency of thought to relapse into the formal and the pedantic, and continually turning the gaze away from the petty toward the great, and away from the limited and the bounded toward the broad and the free. Moreover, out of the

abundance of his riches Plato has offered diverse things to diverse epochs. In later antiquity, he became the protagonist of those who sought to satisfy by means of philosophy the growing religious longing: he was recognised as the priestly herald of the true wisdom, which freed men from the beguiling illusion of the senses and guided their thoughts back to the eternal home. Yet the same philosopher, with his many-sided life, his artistic charm, and his youthful joy in beauty, became the favourite thinker of the Renaissance: reverence for him was in that age the bond of union between the greatest masters. And do not such names as Winckelmann, Schleiermacher, and Boeckh show how far Plato's influence extends into our own time? Thus, his life-work has woven a golden cord about the ages, and the saying of the later Greek philosopher, "The Platonic grace and charm are forever new," has perfect truth even to-day.

### III. ARISTOTLE

#### (a) *General Characteristics*

Aristotle's (384-322) view of life was determined by quite other conditions of fortune and personal character. The son of a Macedonian court physician, he was not involved by birth and education in the inner conflicts of Greek life, as was Plato, nor was he driven by indignation at the sordidness of actual conditions into antagonism to them; rather he came from the borders of the Greek world to its centre, impelled by the sole desire to appropriate the accumulated riches of a fully matured civilisation. Furthermore, he found there an entirely different state of things than did the reformer Plato. The intellectual ferment, the feverish excitement, the brilliant creative work of the fifth century were long past. The time had come for calm, deliberate research; and it was to this work of research that Aristotle gave himself, and his labours represent its culmination. Thoroughly Greek in character and disposition, he was yet far enough removed from the turmoil of daily life to survey

with impartiality the total achievement of the Greek people, and to find in his joy in this employment consolation for the evils of the time.

At the first view, the sober prose of the Aristotelian narrative, the simple objectivity of his method, and the severe repression of all personal feeling might easily create the impression that the thinker had already outgrown the associations of classical antiquity, and belonged to the learned period of Hellenism. Unquestionably Aristotle was a great scholar, perhaps the greatest the world has known; but before all else he was a profound thinker, a man of all-comprehensive ideas and great power of statement. That he assimilated to his own ideas a vast material, and so prescribed the course which science and philosophy followed for centuries, constitutes his principal title to greatness. As a thinker, however, Aristotle is wholly rooted in the classical world: its fundamental views, its valuations, work on uninterruptedly in him. Whoever traces his doctrines and conceptions back to their source soon becomes aware of the peculiar Greek quality concealed beneath their apparent universality. In a word, Aristotle's system brings the substance of the classic world of Greece to marvellously perfect scientific expression, and so hands it down to future humanity.

The sympathetic attitude toward tradition, and the endeavour to maintain a friendly relation with actual conditions, of themselves indicate a disposition different from that of Plato. Instead of the latter's powerful and independent personality, with its inevitable antagonism to its surroundings, its passionate fervour and the strong, harshly contrasted colours of its view of the world, we have in Aristotle a simple, serious, never-wearying effort to comprehend the objective world, to discover its actual state, and to trace all its relationships. With this appeal to the actual world, this linking of thought with things, activity resolves itself into the tireless industry that energetically explores the world and brings forth its hidden riches for the service of man. Thus, out of the philosophy created by a sovereign personality there grows the philosophy resulting from an all-con-



quering industry; this too is a permanent type, and the source of a particular view of life.

(b) *Elements of the Aristotelian View of the World*

The peculiar character of the Aristotelian view of the world appears most readily by comparison with the Platonic. Aristotle himself is chiefly conscious of his opposition to Plato; whereas, in truth, they have a great deal in common. First of all, he shares with Plato the conviction that human life is to be comprehended only from the stand-point of the whole of reality: with him, also, our existence finds its source in the cosmos; our deeds are true through conformity with reality; all activity follows its object, all method the matter in hand. But it is intelligence that unites us to the universe; hence, here also, intelligence is the essence of our being. Truth is revealed only to thought, and to thought in the form of concepts; hence, here again, philosophy becomes pre-eminently the science of concepts; investigation should transform the world into a realm of concepts. Finally, Aristotle shares with his master the high regard for form; it constitutes also for him the abiding essence as well as the worth and beauty of things.

With such decided agreement in the general point of view, Aristotle's philosophy retains enough kinship with Platonism to admit of its being harmonised with a broad view of the latter. But apart from this general similarity, it presents the furthest conceivable divergence from Platonism. For, while for Plato there is no eternal truth and no pure beauty without the strictest separation of the world of essence from that of appearance, Aristotle's chief concern is to show the unity of all reality. According to the latter's conviction, we only need to understand the world aright in order to recognise in it an empire of reason, and to find in it all that human beings require. The Platonic Doctrine of Ideas is rejected as an inadmissible separation of the actual world from the world of real being. Moreover, there is no room here for a religion. To be sure, Aristotle affirms the



existence of a transcendent Deity as the source of reason, and as the origin of the motion which from eternity to eternity pervades the universe. But he denies to this Deity any activity within the world; concern with external things, not to say petty human affairs, would destroy the completeness of the Deity's life. So God, or pure Intelligence, himself unmoved, moves the world by his mere being; any further development of things arises from their own nature. Here, accordingly, there is no moral order of the world, and no Providence. Likewise, there can be no hope of a personal immortality. True, the power of thought in us does not spring from a mere natural process; and it will not be extinguished with the dissolution of the body, but return to the universal reason. But such indestructibility of the divine in us does not mean the continuance of the individual.

With the disappearance of religion the spiritual inwardness and greatness of soul of a Plato are lost. Life receives narrower limits, and its dominant feeling becomes more sober. But the above negation has not the significance for Aristotle of a surrender of the rationality of the actual world, or of the ideality of life. The world with its own undisrupted being here seems equal to the attainment of all aims, while the present life now becomes of sufficient importance fully to occupy and to satisfy mankind. But the rationality of the world does not lie exposed upon the surface; science is necessary, in order to free the appearance of things from illusion and to penetrate beyond the confusions and contradictions of the first impression to the harmony of the whole. Out of the effort to attain this unity there springs a thoroughly individual view of the world and of life, a system of immanent idealism, which is incomparable in the poise and precision of its achievement.

The first antithesis Aristotle undertakes to solve is that of Matter and Form. Plato, to insure its independence and purity, severed Form completely from sensuous existence, and ascribed it to the latter only in a derivative sense. But Aristotle knows Form only as united with Matter; it is actual only within the living process which always includes Matter also. This living

process is a striving upward of Matter toward Form, and a seizure of the Matter by the Form. For the principal movement always resides with the Form, as the animating and shaping Force. Hence the developed being must always precede the one which is evolving, and every attempt to derive the actual from non-rational beginnings must be rejected. In the case of terrestrial life, it is true that the Matter is confined only for a limited time, and in death disappears from the structure. But in generation the Form continually seizes new Matter, so that evolution is a constant victory of Form over the formless, and also of the good over the less good. For in view of the readiness with which Matter receives the Form, it would hardly do to speak of a principle of evil. Aristotle, indeed, is proud of the fact that his own system does not ascribe an independent power to evil, and hence avoids any duality of principles. Such evils as exist in human affairs spring from the tendency in Matter not to carry out fully the movement toward Form, but to remain arrested upon a lower stage. In this way much that fails of its purpose originates. Yet the philosopher is reassured by the reflection that evil nowhere manifests an independent nature, but always consists in an abatement from the good, a deprivation of excellence.

Such a solution of the antithesis alters the view of development inwardly as well. If Form is less an archetype superior to things than a force at work within them, what we may call the artistic view of reality fades before the dynamic; the evolution of life itself becomes the main thing. The world now appears ruled by ends, that is, by life-wholes, which comprise within themselves a multitude of processes and unite them to a joint result. Such life-wholes are seen first of all in organisms, which exist in an ascending scale according to the degree of articulation. That is to say, the more sharply the organs and functions are separated the greater will be the total efficiency: man accordingly constitutes the highest form of natural life. But the sphere of ends extends beyond the realm of organic beings to the universe; or rather, the conception of the organic em-

braces the whole of nature. Nowhere in the universe do motions appear to intersect each other confusedly, rather every motion takes place in a determinate direction, and arrives at a fixed point of termination, where it passes into a permanent state, namely, some equivalent effect. Herewith we encounter the sharp distinction between an activity directed merely to an end beyond itself, and the complete activity that has its end within itself, called in Aristotelian phrase "energy." This complete activity, with its development of all latent capacities, and its union of all multiplicity into a living process, is in no wise a mere play upon the surface, but moves the whole being and discloses the uttermost depths of things. This holds good both of the individual and of the universe. Traversed by movement, complete activity itself remains at rest, and forms, with all its complexity, a living, organic whole—not something "episodic," like a bad tragedy.

A similar effort to attain unity appears in Aristotle's treatment of the mind and the body, or the inner and the outer. He neither knows of, nor looks for, a separate existence of the soul. The soul forms with the body a single life-process; it needs the body, just as vision needs the eye, or any function its organ. Hence the sensuous ought never to be decried; even in the process of knowledge it stands in high honour. True, this primary view is summarily sacrificed to the necessity that thought should surmount all natural processes. It could not grasp an enduring truth, nor reproduce faithfully the varied multiplicity of things, were it entangled in the changes and contradictions of the sensuous world. We must, therefore, assign to thought a position of supremacy, a share in the divine and the eternal. Yet whatever transpires upon this summit alters nothing of the outlook upon the rest of the world; this shows soul and body closely intertwined and co-ordinated.

In harmony with his fundamentally monistic tendency, Aristotle is likewise unable to separate inner from outer in the matter of conduct, and so to build up a moral realm of pure inwardness; rather he places inner and outer in a relation of unceasing

reciprocity, and everywhere unites energy of will and compliant outer conditions into a single organic whole. In his view, all volition tends to become externally visible, and since such an outward embodiment requires external means, the environment acquires far greater worth than it possessed for Plato. Likewise, the soul is here not furnished with ready-made concepts, but must acquire them at the hands of experience; so, too, social surroundings exercise a decisive influence upon moral development. For such capacities for moral growth as slumber in us are aroused and developed only by action: yet conduct must at first be imposed from without in the form of customs and laws; then, finally, the outward requirement becomes transformed into personal volition. Hence, in direct opposition to Plato, for whom there could be no true morality, *i. e.*, virtue founded upon insight, without a liberation from all social bonds, we have in Aristotle a recognition of the beneficent influence of society.

Aristotle further brings about a nearer approach of the universal and the particular. Thus, he does not sever the universals from individual things and oppose them to the latter, as does Plato; instead, he ascribes reality to them only as existing in concrete individuals. Nor is he fond of dwelling upon some summit of the highest universality; rather his thought is persistently drawn back to the world of perception and captured by its wealth of life. Whatever belongs to a thing exclusively and as a *differentia* he recognises as the completion of its being. Thus, *e. g.*, that which is peculiar to man forms the perfection of his nature, not what he possesses in common with other living beings.

The principal contrast under which effort is viewed by Aristotle is that of mere existence on the one hand, and of complete activity on the other; of empty, unsatisfied life, which ever looks vaguely beyond, and of life which realises its end and finds satisfaction in itself; of the being given by nature ( $\zeta\eta\nu$ ), and that well-being ( $\epsilon\upsilon\ \zeta\eta\nu$ ) which is achieved by one's own acts. The state of nature is indeed the necessary presupposition of all development; and, viewed from this stand-point, the



higher stages may appear to be superfluous. But it is in rising above the plane of mere necessity that life acquires content and worth; then we attain something that pleases in itself; then we find ourselves in the realm of beauty, and hence of real joy in life.

Aristotle, in fact, is profoundly convinced that complete activity, with its transformation of the whole being into living reality, yields at the same time the full sense of happiness. Hence happiness is principally our own creation; it cannot be communicated from without, nor put on like an ornament; rather it is proportional to rational activity and increases with it. If it be true that all life possesses a "natural sweetness," it must be particularly satisfying to the virtuous man, who knows how to give it a noble content. Whoever condemns pleasure, considers only its lowest forms, since it may accompany activity on all its higher levels. Moreover, pleasure may lead to the refinement and perfecting of activity, as, *e. g.*, delight in music promotes its creation. With this vindication of pleasure as the accompaniment of all normal activity, we reach the classical expression of "eudemonism," which teaches that the pleasure inseparable from activity stands far above all selfish enjoyment.

Hence only when activity attains complete, substantial efficiency does it lift human existence up to happiness. All show in conduct yields only the show of happiness. Accordingly, Aristotle insists upon veracity, and denounces every form of pretence: "solid," "genuine" (*σπουδαῖος*), is his favourite expression for the man who is the embodiment of virtue.

But excellence rises into distinction by the working out of the difference between beauty and utility, or that which pleases in itself, and that which is valued as a means to something else. Whoever makes utility the chief consideration is guilty of an inner perversion of life. For the service of utility continually directs activity to outward, alien things, while, with all the supposed advantages, the self is left inwardly empty. The result is a sharp contrast between a noble and a mean, a free and a servile, conduct of life. It is the business of a free and large-



mind man everywhere to seek beauty rather than utility; indeed, from this point of view, the lack of any useful results becomes an evidence of the inner worth of an occupation. Just this forms the proud boast of pure philosophy, that it offers no advantage whatever for the material life, but has its end wholly within itself. Thus we see that Aristotle's stronger leaning toward the actual world, and his rejection of the world of Ideas, have by no means sapped the power of ideal feeling.

(c) *The Sphere of Human Experience*

We have seen that human life must find its tasks and its rewards exclusively in this earthly existence, yet also that this limitation caused no serious conflicts for Aristotle. For this life affords opportunity for the full employment of all our faculties, and therefore for the attainment of the highest happiness. Hence there remain no wishes or hopes which cannot be fulfilled; nor is any need of individual immortality felt, or any impulse to cross the boundaries of existence prescribed by nature.

It thus becomes all the more important to make full use of this present life, and to raise it to the highest point of efficiency. With this in view, we must have special regard to our peculiarly human faculties, and determine our activity accordingly. The characteristic faculty of man is reason, which means, according to Aristotle, the power of thought, with its capacities for forming general concepts and arriving at general truths. Intelligence must, on the one hand, develop itself, and, on the other, react strongly upon those lower forms of mental life which we possess in common with the animals. This constitutes our life-work. Activity in accordance with reason, unobstructed and extending over the whole of life—not for a short time only, for one swallow does not make a spring—this and nothing else constitutes the happiness of man.

Possessed of such a conviction, Aristotle insists strongly upon filling the whole of life with strenuous activity. Even excellence

does not suffice, unless it is brought into exercise. For in sleep we experience no true happiness; nor in the Olympic games are the laurels won by the spectators, but by those who take part in the contest. But with Aristotle the unfolding of the active powers encounters no great obstacles. The soul is not estranged from itself, nor does it need to undergo a complete transformation, as with Plato; rather, human reason is merely undeveloped, and needs only to rise from latent capacity to a perfected faculty, while natural impulse always aims at the right mark.

Aristotle is unable to pursue the development of human life further without investigating more closely the relation of the inner motives of activity to the external surroundings and conditions. But in doing so, he shows the influence of opposing tendencies. On the one hand, the close connection between the inner and the outer, involved in his view of the world, and his dread of severing the bonds which unite the individual to kindred, friends, and countrymen, forbid a complete detachment of activity and destiny from the environment: it is impossible to withdraw ourselves from what there takes place and exerts its influence upon us. Tending in the opposite direction is Aristotle's effort to make conduct as independent as possible, and to exempt it from the contingencies of external relations, bondage to which throws us into a vacillation incompatible with true happiness. The result of these conflicting tendencies is a compromise, whereby the main thing in conduct becomes the inner act, the power and capacity of the agent, while its complete success depends partly upon outward circumstances. Just as a drama requires a scenic mounting, so our conduct requires for its completion embodiment in a visible performance, presentation upon the stage of life. But the inner act remains by far the chief factor. External goods serve only as the means and expression of action; they have value only so far as the latter appropriates and uses them; beyond this limit they become a useless accessory, indeed an impediment to life. Hence any effort toward the unlimited accumulation of external goods

must be emphatically condemned. For it is possible to attain the highest happiness with only moderate means; one can do what is beautiful, *i. e.*, act nobly, without ruling over land and sea. But the opposition of fortune must not be too great. Not only are certain elementary conditions, such as a normal physical stature, health, etc., essential to a happy life, but, on the other hand, overwhelming adversity can destroy it. Yet Aristotle's calm good sense, intent upon the average experience, and less concerned for the destiny of the race than for the welfare of individuals, is not deeply agitated over the possible calamities. The capable man, in his opinion, can face the battle of life with a stout heart. Our mental powers are quite equal to the ordinary evils. The heavy blows of fortune, such as befell Priam, are rare exceptions; but even they cannot make the noble man miserable. For when he patiently bears the heaviest misfortunes, not from stupidity, but out of greatness of soul, the beauty of his spirit shines through all his suffering. Hence all the disasters and inequalities of life do not shake Aristotle's faith in reason, nor prevent him from entering confidently upon a closer analysis of life's scope and content.

In doing this, he distinguishes two divergent aims in life: the development of the mind in and for itself, and the subjugation of the physical nature, or, the theoretical and the practical lives, as he terms them.

Of these two lives, Aristotle accords unqualified pre-eminence to the theoretical. It makes us freer from outward circumstances and more self-reliant. Then, science is concerned with the universe and its immutable elements; insight can here attain a stability and an exactness which are denied to the practical sphere by its ceaseless change. Aristotle's various expressions on this point culminate in the view that the acquiring of knowledge is the purest form of a large and self-sufficing activity, and that it most nearly fulfils the conditions demanded by the idea of happiness. Hence he says that true happiness is coincident only with the search for truth. It is not in our human capacity that we have a share in it, but only in so far as the

divine dwells in us; and this indwelling of the divine constitutes the only human immortality.

On the other hand, the practical sphere appears at first at a distinct disadvantage; its one problem is to subject the natural impulses to the mastery of the intellect. But this does not mean a control so to say by compulsion, but by an inward rationalising of the man's desires, by an incorporation of reason into the individual will; thus there is developed the conception of moral virtue, of a certain bearing and disposition of the whole man; at the same time, too, an inner relation of man to man. Aristotle's full and sympathetic account of this sphere readily creates the impression that he is not here concerned with some lower stage, but with a whole realm, indeed with the heart of life itself.

This impression is created in particular by Aristotle's treatment of the conception which, for him, dominates the whole of the practical life, the conception, namely, of the Mean. This conception is reached by a simple reflection. If the physical life is to be subject to reason, or, what is the same thing, reason is to be exhibited in the physical life, dangers arising from two opposite sources must be avoided. The physical life may either resist the sway of reason with unbridled violence, or it may prove to be too weak and meagre to afford reason the necessary means of a full development. Hence the just mean becomes the sum of practical wisdom. Moral virtue must avoid both a too much and a too little. For example, the brave man occupies the mean between the foolhardy man and the coward, the thrifty man the mean between the spendthrift and the miser, the agreeable man the mean between the wag and the dullard. In this doctrine of the mean, Aristotle shows himself to be in close touch with the Greek people, his full descriptions often appear to be pictures of actual life, and even his diction follows the vernacular. At the same time, many fundamental convictions which remind us of Plato pervade his work. Thus, in his doctrine of the mean, Aristotle expressly appeals to the analogy of art, whose masterpieces neither permit anything to



be added nor to be taken away. Likewise, the ethical idea of justice exerts an influence. For every aim within the system of human ends should receive its precise due, in accordance with the individual case; any departure therefrom, toward the more or toward the less, involves an injustice. Even if Aristotle surrenders the Platonic idea of a moral order, of an all-pervading universal law of justice, he none the less asserts its power within the sphere of human conduct.

The demand that the just mean be followed makes conduct vital rather than conventional. What the just mean is cannot be settled once for all, owing to the ceaseless change of life's conditions; nor can it be deduced from general propositions; on the contrary, it must be freshly determined every moment, in accordance with each particular situation. This requires, above all, accuracy of estimate, an unerring tact. Conduct thus becomes the Art of Life; existence is every moment tense, since the good helmsman must each time steer his way between Scylla and Charybdis with the same care.

Consequently, the just mean is unattainable unless we perfectly comprehend both the attendant circumstances and our own capacities. To avoid undertaking either too much or too little, we must know precisely how much we are capable of achieving; we must not only be efficient, but also know that we are so, and how far our efficiency extends. We should, therefore, be as free from all empty vanity and idle boasting as from faint-hearted self-depreciation. In other words, a just self-consciousness here appears indispensable to the perfection of life; hence self-knowledge in the early Greek sense, *i. e.*, a correct estimate of one's own capacities, in distinction from a brooding over one's inner state, attains with Aristotle its most important philosophical development.

Thus, the principle of the Mean works its way into every ramification of life and adapts itself to all life's varied aspects. The result is that everywhere intelligence is introduced and action subjected to thought. As a further consequence, the relation of instinct to reason becomes such that the supremacy of the



mind is preserved without violating the rights of the natural disposition. For whatever nature has implanted in man, as, *e. g.*, self-love, is forthwith accepted; to attempt to eradicate it would be as perverse as it would be vain. Yet it must conform to the law of the mean, and recognise its limit, if it would work in harmony with reason; and for that mind and thought are required. Accordingly, the notion of the Limit signalises a triumph of mind over crude nature, and at the same time a harmonious adjustment between true nature and reason. The Aristotelian mean is not an endorsement of humdrum mediocrity, which shrinks from everything great. For its aim is not to keep everything down to a medium level, but merely to preserve the harmony of reason and nature within the sphere of conduct. How little the thought of the mean excludes that of greatness appears most clearly from the fact that Aristotle finds his ideal of human life in the high-minded man (*μεγαλόψυχος*), and bestows upon the delineation of his character the most sympathetic care.

The high-minded man has greatness of mind, and is fully conscious of it. He represents the just mean between the man who is vain of his capacities and the one who has a certain greatness, but does not know it, and hence does not sufficiently develop his powers. The high-minded man is not only fully conscious of his own importance, but will everywhere make it emphatically felt; and in all that he does and leaves undone he will, above all, preserve his dignity and greatness of soul. Possessed of such a disposition, he will speak only the plain truth, love openly and hate openly, be free from all fear of men, accept favours reluctantly, and return those received in superabundant measure, gladly confer benefits himself, be proud and reserved toward the great, but friendly toward those beneath him. He will always esteem beauty above utility and the truth above appearance. And he will choose for himself the most difficult and the most thankless of tasks. His outward demeanour will correspond with such a disposition. That is, he will always conduct himself with composure and dignity, speak deliberately, never be precipitate, etc.

Although there is much in such a picture to astonish one, it manifestly represents the active life developed into a rounded, self-sufficient personality. Whoever expects as confidently as Aristotle does that happiness will be found in a calm, self-contained activity, cannot make the effects of conduct the principal thing, but will look chiefly to the state of the agent himself. And in truth, it is the inner conditions of conduct that Aristotle investigates with particular care. Such conceptions as those of intention, and of voluntary and involuntary acts, he subjects to searching analysis, and gradually shifts the centre of gravity from the outward performance to the inner attitude of the agent. Hence the notion of self-contained conduct deepens into that of a self-contained life; the idea of moral personality detaches itself and life becomes wholly self-centred.

True, these developments are left by Aristotle largely in an unfinished state. The majestic personality described above is primarily an affair of the individual: if man measures himself less by an ideal of reason than by comparison with other men, moral worth becomes a matter of individual eminence in contrast with others. Accordingly, the idea of personality develops more disintegrating than unifying force. Thus, in the midst of what is new, we discern the limitations of the time.

But whatever aims, either in the practical or the theoretical sphere, are brought to light by Aristotle, they must necessarily appear as attainable to such an exalted faith in reason as his. He is not, indeed, unconscious of the difficulties. His mind is much too open to the impressions of experience to see nothing but reason everywhere. And his judgment of mankind is too much influenced by the national habits of thought not to distinguish two classes, a large majority of bad, or at least commonplace, natures, and a small minority of noble ones. Men are ruled by passion and appetite; and the sense of the masses is not for the noble and the beautiful, but for the useful. They are brought to wrong-doing, however, mainly by inordinate desire and selfish greed. "Appetite is insatiable, and the multitude live only to gratify it."

But Aristotle does not so lightly deliver up the human sphere to unreason; rather, he finds abundant means of correcting the above impression. In the first place, he is of opinion that the evil in man is easily exaggerated, inasmuch as what is only a consequence of natural conditions is often set down as guilt. Thus, *e. g.*, man is taxed with ingratitude, because the recipients of favours usually manifest less feeling than those who bestow them, children less affection than their parents, etc., whereas the simple explanation is that giving causes more pleasure than receiving, and that this satisfaction makes the object of our bounty pleasing to us. Then, Aristotle is not ready to jumble together in one lot all the less capable men; instead he distinguishes several degrees, and recognises in the highest an approach to the ideal. On the other hand, the really vicious, the criminal, are to be excluded; but the number is not large, and the average condition represents rather venial weakness than positive evil. Furthermore, there exists a not important difference between those who aim at gain and self-indulgence, and those who pursue honour and power. Particularly honour, the reflection of virtue, lifts conduct to a higher plane. But even the residue of imperfection is exalted in Aristotle's mind by the conviction that also in the lower there is a natural impulse toward the higher, an impulse that carries it beyond its present condition and its limited consciousness; for, "everything has by nature something of the divine." Associated with this tendency to see in the lower less the degenerate and the abandoned than what is struggling upward is a highly characteristic belief that the life of the community represents a summation of reason. Granted that the average man individually accomplishes very little: yet let men unite themselves into a community, and they become as one personality; the good in all can fuse into one, and the whole become morally and intellectually superior even to the greatest individuals. Inasmuch, namely, as each contributes his special faculty, and the various capacities become organised, the whole which results is freer from anger and other passions, more protected against blunders,

and, especially, surer in its judgment, than the mere individual. Even with music and poetry, the great public is the best judge. In making such an apology for the multitude, Aristotle is not thinking of just any haphazard, motley public, but of the more stable community of a city possessing a homogeneous civilisation. Yet without a strong belief in an element of good in men, this apology would not, even so, have been possible.

Aristotle's convictions as to history accord excellently with such a faith. Their basis is to be found in the Platonic philosophy of history. With Aristotle, as with Plato, there is no ascent *ad infinitum*, but a cycle of similar periods. Given the eternity of the world—which Aristotle was the first to teach with perfect distinctness—and an infinitude lies behind us; periodically, whatever has been evolved up to a given time is destroyed by great floods, and the process begins over again; only the popular religion (rationalistically interpreted) and language unite the several epochs by transmitting, at least in remnants, the wisdom of earlier periods. But to this general view Aristotle adds the special one, that in classical Greece the culmination of such a revolution had been reached shortly before. Hence attention should be concentrated upon it, rather than upon the future, which does not give promise of great progress. Theoretical investigation, however, has assigned to it the task of scientifically probing the grounds of whatever may be brought to light by circumstance and custom, and so of translating into concepts the actual historical world.

Accordingly, the course of the argument justifies Aristotle's own attitude toward the Greek world. If in the civilisation of Greece the highest has been attained that ever can be, then the effort to seek out the reason immanent in it, and, so far as possible, to make it the point of departure for his own work, is amply justified. Aristotle is thus enabled not only to place himself in a sympathetic attitude toward the foundations of Greek civilisation, but also to esteem public opinion as a sure index to the truth.



(d) *The Several Departments of Life*

The several departments of life attain with Aristotle a far greater independence, and they offer more special problems and demand more work than with Plato. Here the particular is not a mere application, but a further development, of the general. Life reaches out in all directions; and since its span covers a greater area, notwithstanding its ceaseless movement it gains in essential repose. The vast increase of detail destroys neither the unity of the whole nor the dominance of certain all-pervading convictions; for however much the leading ideas adapt themselves to the peculiarities of the several spheres, the bond of analogy holds all together. Everywhere there is a high estimate placed upon activity, everywhere the detection of an inner reason, everywhere a reconciliation of contradictions; everywhere, too, there is a simple objectivity, a nearer approach to the immediate life of the soul, and a greater transparency in the articulation of the system.

## (a) THE FORMS OF HUMAN ASSOCIATION

More independent and richer in content appears, first, the sphere of human intercourse. How Aristotle is drawn from the universe to man is shown, among other things, by his judgment as to the relative value of the senses. Plato and the other Greek thinkers had declared the eye to be the most important sense, owing to its perception of the great world; and Aristotle, too, does not reject this estimate. But, on more careful consideration, he declares the ear to be more important for the intellectual development, on account of its relation to language and hence to human society. Furthermore, the difference between human speech and the sounds made by animals he regards as an evidence of the greater intimacy of our intercourse.

Aristotle displayed the liveliest interest in the differentiation of human life and action. He was an acute observer and de-



lineator of the various types of human nature, and his school introduced descriptions of the several "characters." Likewise, his followers were only imitating the effort of the master when they devoted special attention to the virtues of social life. Finally, the higher estimate which Aristotle placed upon man and upon human society is closely connected with the careful consideration of history which distinguished him. The achievements of his predecessors were kept constantly in view in his own studies, and it was from his school that the history of philosophy sprang.

But the fullest development of human life still leaves the main structure of society simple enough. Two principal forms comprise the whole: the relation of friendship, and life in the State, the one covering the personal relations of individuals and the other the wider human intercourse and the organisation of intellectual work.

Friendship has an incomparable worth for Aristotle because, first of all, after the surrender of religion, it alone affords a richer development of the life of sentiment, and scope for the full realisation of individuality. "A life without friends no one would desire, even though he possessed all other goods."

Friendship in the sense of Aristotle, however, means the association with another man—his thought is particularly of one friend—in a steadfast community of life and conduct, and with such a complete reception of the other into one's own world of thought, as to gain in him another "self." Friendship is here no mere affinity of minds, but a union of the conduct and effective work of both; even in this case everything depends upon activity, the state of feeling being always closely connected with and determined by it. Hence the interest lies beyond the disposition and in the achievement, and friendship grows with the greatness of the man. The aim is to interchange the fruits of corresponding attainments, and so to keep pace in a noble rivalry. Thus friendship merges into the idea of justice. There is here no place for a forgetting of self and a naïve devotion, for an unmerited and immeasurable love. The Aristotelian friendship is

no liberation from self, but a widening of self. For it is rooted in a genuine self-love, in a friendship of man with his own being. Just as only the virtuous man is at one with himself in all that he does, or is a good friend to himself, so only he can show true and lasting friendship. And friendship enhances happiness, since not only is one's activity increased, but the friend's noble deeds are more visible than one's own.

As this conception of friendship involves harmony of action, and indeed, of regulated, visible action, so it allows of a full justification of family life with its fixed limits. On the other hand, compared with the relation of friendship, the idea of humanity is much too shadowy to exert an influence upon life. True, we are told that every man feels the bond of man to man, that we have a natural inclination to help one another, and desire companionship even without any thought of advantage; but all that remains in the background, and leads to no fixed relationship, no community of work. It is the smaller, more easily surveyed, groups that engross men's attention; seldom does the glance extend beyond one's own nation. The Greek people, however, with their union of the courage of the European and the intelligence of the Asiatic nations, appear to be the flower of the race. United in a single state, they could rule the world.

But this thought of a universal empire ruled by the Greeks—noteworthy enough in the tutor of Alexander—is not further pursued; rather, the chief form of human association remains for Aristotle the single Greek state, the city-state with its limited territory, its fixed summary of all human problems, and its close personal union of the individual citizens. Nowhere more than here, where its glory already lay behind it, is this city-state illuminated and glorified by theory. In defence of its narrow limits, Aristotle urges that a proper community is possible only where the citizens can form a judgment of one another; but the deeper reason lay in the fact that only a circumscribed community, inseparably uniting all intellectual aims with actual companionship, could become a personality after the manner of the individual. That the state should have such a personal

nature is, however, the essence of the Aristotelian doctrine. From this conviction, we have the direct corollary that the ends of both state and individual are identical, and that there is the closest connection between ethics and politics. If the highest good of man is a self-contained, self-sufficing completeness of activity, the state should seek its welfare in nothing else. There follows the most emphatic disapproval of all aggressive foreign politics, all greed for unlimited expansion, all wars for conquest, etc. Instead of pursuing such a course, let the state find its tasks in peaceful activities, in the development and organisation of the capabilities of its citizens into a compact, vigorous society.

Rational activity here implies, above all, the mental and moral efficiency of the state and of its individual members; hence the chief effort must be directed to spiritual ends. Even under the conditions of life in common, material goods have a value only as a means to activity, and they should be kept well within the implied limits. For the most serious disturbances arise from the importunate demands of the multitude for the unrestricted accumulation of property and riches. Moreover, the delusive expectation that happiness can be found in worldly possessions is disastrously increased by the introduction of money with the opportunity it offers for unlimited hoarding; for the lust for material wealth then possesses men more exclusively than ever. Hence, uncompromising war must be waged against it, even on the part of the civic community, whose duty it is to keep the citizens' thirst for gain within reasonable bounds, and particularly to oppose the dominion of money. In this spirit, all profit from the loaning of money is condemned, every form of interest declared to be usury, and in general this whole inversion of means and end stigmatised as immoral. Thus we have the foundation of the distinctly ethical type of political economy, which dominated economic theory during the Middle Ages and also profoundly influenced practice. With Aristotle the two presuppositions of this doctrine are clear: an exact limitation of material goods by a fixed and easily recognisable end in

life, and a complete correspondence between the welfare of the community and that of the individual.

If, however, the individual is but a miniature of the state, then in their reciprocal relations the unqualified supremacy belongs to the latter. As a fact, Aristotle defends the complete subjection of the individual: he reduced this subordination to formulas which have been handed down throughout the whole course of history as a classical expression of the doctrine of the omnipotence of the state. The state he calls the self-sufficient community; only in it can man realise his rational nature; accordingly, he says of it that it was prior (*i. e.*, in its nature and conception prior) to man.

For the illustration of his doctrine of the state, Aristotle is fond of employing the metaphor of an organism; for he it was who introduced this conception into political theory. As, in the case of an organism, any single organ lives and performs its function only in connection with the whole, but so soon as it is severed from the whole, becomes dead matter, so it is with the relation of the individual to the state. Yet this theory appears to be particularly adapted to allow the powerful development within the whole of the peculiar capabilities and effective activity of individuals.

An organism, namely, is viewed as the higher or more perfect the greater its articulation, or differentiation of functions and organs. So, likewise in the state there should be the greatest possible division of labour. This conviction, enforced by Aristotle's keen observation and sober judgment, resulted in a decisive rejection of communistic theories. Work is well executed only when it is carefully organised; and the strongest motives to care and devotion arise from man's ownership of property and from his personal associations; for it gives him an unspeakable pleasure to call something his own. Moreover, the adherents of communism are the victims of an optimistic delusion when they expect from the mere community of property a harmony of all wills and the disappearance of crime. For the chief root of evil is not poverty, but the love of pleasure and in-



satisfiable cupidity: "one does not become a tyrant merely to escape the cold."

The idea of an organism in its ancient interpretation not only enhances the importance of the individual, but it effects also a thorough animation of the whole; it does not look upon the state as an artificial mechanism directed by superior insight, but as a living being sustained by its own powers. Hence it is essential to gain the loyal adherence of the citizens to the constitution of the state, and to give them all some share in political work. This, together with his view of the summation of reason in the state, makes Aristotle an advocate of democracy—to be sure, a democracy which is considerably limited in being worked out. At the same time, in direct opposition to Plato, he sets the universal order above even the most eminent personality: "Whoever lets law rule, lets God and reason rule alone; whoever lets man rule, lets the animal in him rule too."

The total effect of Aristotle's discussion of political questions far exceeds the influence of his particular theory of the state. Himself expatriated, his clear vision and calm judgment none the less so penetrated into the peculiar character of this domain, and his thinking developed so purely the inner necessity of things, that his work forms an inexhaustible mine of political wisdom. The immense material that accumulated he subdued by means of simple concepts and analyses; ideals he energetically upheld, but they do not interfere with the due appreciation of real, and particularly of economic, conditions; the manifold conflicting interests are weighed in the balance with painstaking conscientiousness and without feeble compromises; the political view attains the closest relation to history, and accordingly becomes more elastic and fruitful; the significance of the living present, the right of the existing state of things, meets with full recognition. But the insight and sagacity of Aristotle's political views are equalled by his strong sense of justice and truth; everything that dazzles without being instructive, and, especially, whatever tends toward individual advantage at the expense of others, he decisively rejects. Characterised by such a union of technical



greatness and ethical purpose, Aristotle's politics, notwithstanding all that is problematic in its detailed execution, remains a wonderful masterpiece.

(β) ART

Although his doctrines are in all essential points an echo of Plato's æsthetic views, Aristotle himself lacks an intimate personal relation to art. But his objective method again affords him such a clear insight into the nature of his subject that he is not only successful in elucidating a variety of particular points, but also is the first to formulate the main principles of art. Like Plato, he understands art to be an imitation of reality. However, he does not find the subject of imitation in the several accidental, changeable features, but in the universal and typical aspect of things. The artist is not concerned with what happens at any particular moment, but with what happens always or usually. Hence Aristotle claims that poetry is more philosophical and richer in content than history, that Homer stands above Heroditus. The revelation of a new world, wherein the creative fantasy comes to its full rights, is still far distant; but art here acquires a spiritual worth and has a specific task assigned to it. Aristotle, however, turns rapidly from general considerations to the particular arts; and of these he lays bare the psychological motives and follows out their effects with marvellous insight and clearness. The keystone of his æsthetic theory is provided by the doctrine of tragedy, which has exerted the profoundest influence even in modern times. And it has a particular value for our present consideration, since tragedy implies both a comprehensive view and a creed of human life. Aristotle's doctrine of tragedy, however, is seen in its true light, not when it is understood as a product of free reflection, but when it is taken as a translation into concepts and laws of the actual achievements of the Greek drama. Here again the thinker's attitude is altogether retrospective; he does not offer new suggestions, but seeks out the *rationale* of the great works

of the past. He finds that the problem of tragedy does not lie so much within man himself as in his relation to the world; not in the complications and contradictions of his own being, but in the conflict with the world: it is the incongruity between inner guilt and outward prosperity which arouses the tragic sympathies. In accordance with such a fundamental view, the action must possess more unity, coherence, and brevity than in the modern drama with its inner conflicts and spiritual struggles. For, when it is not concerned with inner changes, but with the essentially fixed character of a man who is in direct conflict with destiny, the plot will appear to be the more happy in proportion as everything rushes swiftly to the *dénouement*. Hence the doctrine of the three unities of Time, Place, and Action could claim Aristotle's authority, although not without a forced interpretation of the master's teaching.

Likewise, in considering the effect of tragedy, we must avoid any intrusion of modern thoughts and feelings. Aristotle does not speak of the purging of the whole soul, but of the exercising of the emotions of pity and fear. What he expected from their exercise is still a moot question, upon which we will not enter. Plainly, however, what Aristotle seeks is the effect upon individuals of a concrete, personal situation; *i. e.*, he means to have characters and fortunes represented which will affect every one directly with pity and fear. Corresponding rules and limitations follow. The desired end seems to be most readily attainable by the introduction of great reverses of fortune, especially a reverse from happiness to misery, provided it befall a man who has not removed himself from our sympathies by unnatural or extraordinary deeds, nor met with his misfortunes so much from depravity as from pardonable error. Thus the thought of the Mean, the Limit, appears here also, and not without a tendency to substitute the average man for all men. Accordingly, the heights as well as the depths of human conduct are excluded. The sobriety of Aristotle's theory would be more distinctly felt if every one did not unconsciously supplement it from the very masterpieces from which it drew, yet without exhausting their whole depths.

In this domain, also, Aristotle's handling of his subject exerts an influence which far exceeds that of his conceptions and rules; clear, comprehensive, and objective, his method produces results of permanent value.

#### (γ) SCIENCE

In science we reach the culmination of Aristotle's life-work. The high estimate which he places upon theory is fully matched by his actual achievement. He appears at first to follow an entirely different course from that of his great predecessor. Intuition yields to discussion and the explanation of things by causes; analysis comes to the fore; minutiae find sympathetic consideration; the several theoretical disciplines attain their first independence. Moreover, emotion disappears from scientific investigation, which no longer deeply involves the thinker's practical nature; instead, research means a calm examination of the object and a clear unfolding of its nature; and by extending this effort to the whole of the actual world, investigation becomes synonymous with painstaking, inquisitive, unwearying intellectual toil. It is with this severance from immediate feeling that science first acquires a technical form and its own nomenclature. While Plato felt the unyielding terms borrowed from art as a restriction upon the free movement of his thought, Aristotle became the creator of scientific terminology. The Aristotelian "science" is accordingly far more like science in the modern sense. It can embrace the whole sphere of human experience, and it produces a characteristic type of life, the life of research.

But, notwithstanding this progress, Aristotle remains in close relation to Plato and the classical Greek world. Even the Aristotelian method of research presupposes intuitive truths; the growth of analysis does not endanger the supremacy of synthesis, since all the elements obtained belong from the outset to a whole; nor does the development of separate disciplines destroy the firm coherence of a system. In particular, the relation of man to the world of things is not so changed as might appear

at first sight. For, even if Aristotle restrains subjective feeling, and subordinates it to the necessity of the objective fact, the conception of the objective fact is itself formed under human influence. With his translation of reality into forces, tendencies, capacities, and ends, he, too, is guilty of a personification (although a slight one), and a personification which is the more dangerous, since it easily escapes notice and conceals its own presuppositions. Aristotle's conceptions of the world, in fact, all suffer from a confusion of the psychical and the material, *i. e.*, from a hidden metaphor. And the effect was only the more disastrous the deeper his untiring energy implanted his leading ideas into the world of facts. Thus the rise of modern science was not possible without the destruction of the Aristotelian world of thought.

In truth, Aristotle's incontestable greatness lies less in the investigation of principles than in the extensive contact between his general ideas and the wealth of his observation: to develop the common factors in such contact, to reduce to scientific knowledge an inexhaustible material by the introduction of fruitful ideas—this constitutes his incomparable strength. Here he appears pre-eminently as “the master of those who know” (Dante).

The development of this capacity enables him to wander through the whole realm of knowledge, and everywhere he is fruitful, systematic, and masterful. Constantly we marvel at the even balance of his interest in the universal and in the particular; this leads him at one time to extol pure speculation as the glory of life, the perfection of happiness; and at another it makes him an enthusiastic friend of natural science, and leads him to quote (*apropos* of the attacks upon anatomical study, which were still frequent) the saying of Heraclitus: “Enter; here, too, there are gods.”

Possessed of such qualities, Aristotle was the first to discover the elements and principal functions of human knowledge, and to create a system of logic that has reigned for centuries; he first freed from obscurities such fundamental concepts as time



and space, motion and end; he led thought from the structure of the universe as a whole through all the gradations of nature up to the level of organic life, which also marks the culmination of his own research; he sketched the first system of psychology; he traced human life and conduct both in the ethical and political spheres and in those of oratory and art; and everywhere he was intent upon incorporating into his work the experience and the total achievement of his people. But above all the separate disciplines rises the metaphysics, the earliest systematic science of first principles; this sketched in pure concepts a great outline of reality, the historical influence of which contributed much toward winning a secure position for dialectic, and toward elevating the whole of life to the plane of reflection.

The net result of this herculean task may easily be criticised. Even Aristotle was a child of his time; and it was inevitable that in the then incomplete state of knowledge his indefatigable pursuit of a final, closed system should have had a disastrous effect. For the extraordinary logical power with which in several departments an insufficient material is spun out and woven together often results in the vindication of error instead of truth. But Aristotle, indeed, could not foresee what would come after him, and thus keep his world of thought open for a distant future. Any impartial estimate of him must concede his towering eminence; and particularly such a review as the present owes him gratitude and reverence for having revealed to mankind whole domains of the actual world, and for proving himself a triumphant creator of intellectual life.

#### (e) *Retrospect*

A just estimate of Aristotle rests primarily upon a clear conception of his relation to Hellenism. No longer a participant in the movements of the classical period, but an observer from a distance of its achievements, his intimate relation with the characteristic civilisation of Greece has often failed of recognition; and, as a thinker who translated into concepts and traced back



to causes the vast information he amassed, he has too often been set down as a philosopher of the most abstract type.

That, notwithstanding the developed technique of his investigations, and the elaborate logic of his treatises, his doctrines and conceptions, and his own personality, are firmly rooted in classical Greek soil, was shown even by the consideration of his view of life. For, as surely as this revealed a powerful capacity for independent thought, it also showed that Aristotle's thinking kept steadily in close touch with the Greek world, in fact was permeated with the fundamental views of his people. Cut off from Hellenism, his personality loses all that is most characteristic of it; for to this relation he owes at once his peculiar greatness and his limitations.

But, notwithstanding this intimate relation with his environment, it is possible to distinguish a characteristic Aristotelian type of life. By the force of manly strength, trained efficiency, and simple veracity, knowledge and action here fuse into an all-absorbing life-work, and give a secure foothold in the actual world. Scientific investigation, by advancing from appearance to reality, makes the surrounding world incomparably more significant; to an instructed vision things reveal, even when in apparent inaction, a life of their own, a life regulated according to ends, self-contained and self-sufficing. At the same time, the world resolves itself into a profusion of varied forms, possessing interest alike for science and for practical life. To comprehend, and to unite into the harmony of a cosmos, this far more living and richer world, is the chief task of the life of research. Thus the world acquires stability, life becomes calm, and every form of well-being is expected to result from assiduous labour and steady development. Aristotle, accordingly, is the first of the line of thinkers who look upon life and the world as a continuous process.

The contention that Aristotle's unquestionable greatness lies less in the inner unity of his view of the world and of life than in his subjugation of vast domains of knowledge by means of simple and fruitful ideas is further corroborated by the influence which he has exerted upon history. For Aristotelianism never

has led a progressive movement of thought, nor even afforded to any a powerful stimulus. But it has always proved to be valuable, in fact, indispensable, whenever existing bodies of thought required extension, logical arrangement, and systematic completion. This was shown in later antiquity in its influence upon the work of the compilers; so, too, Christianity, although at first unfriendly toward Aristotle, eagerly turned to him so soon as the immediate excitement was allayed and the time came for thinking out the new ideas; so, finally, he became the chief philosopher of the mediæval Church with its rigid organisation of thought and life. But also in modern times, systematic thinkers of the highest rank, such as Leibniz and Hegel, have placed the very highest estimate upon his services to the history of thought. In short, wherever Aristotelianism has attained an influence it has operated to further logical training, to promote the formation of great systems, and the establishment of a secure foundation for the whole work of civilisation. Without its educative and organising influence, modern science and culture, no less than the ancient, are unthinkable.

Undeniably, this service has often been dearly bought. In times of less intellectual tension, the sheer weight and compactness of the Aristotelian system tended to repress independence of thought; it often seemed as if nothing new could challenge its firmly rooted authority. That, however, was less the fault of the master than of his followers, who possessed no independence to oppose to him.

Quite incontestable, on the other hand, are Aristotle's greatness and beneficial influence in the various departments of knowledge and of life. Here he left deeper traces than any other thinker in the whole course of history. In the most essential points he was the first to direct effort into sure channels; hence, without a due appreciation of his life-work no historical comprehension of our own world of thought is possible.

It was of the greatest consequence for classical antiquity that the epoch-making genius of Plato was followed by the executive

genius of Aristotle; that the comprehensive, clear-sighted, laborious mind of the one took up and carried forward the bold creative work of the other. Hence, on the one hand, there was unfolded in its purity whatever the culture of classical antiquity had to contribute to the deepest things in life; and, on the other, the desire for knowledge wrought itself out into a gigantic intellectual achievement. Thus, the two principal manifestations of an ideal view of the world and an ideal feeling for life, namely, the striving beyond the world, and back to the world, found in Plato and Aristotle respectively embodiments of such importance that they may be regarded as typical.

By philosophy Greek civilisation itself is freed from the contingency inherent in historical development and its innermost essence illuminated and made more accessible to mankind. Its aims and achievements are appropriated by the work of thought in a purified and ennobled form, and given permanent efficacy. Out of this appropriating and refining arises an ideal of intellectual power and of constructive work which unites the true and the beautiful, science and art, in a remarkably perfect manner. And this creative activity is not divorced from moral character, as it often is in later times, but combined with nobility of personal disposition, and a plain faith in the dignity of goodness. For the rest, this ideal of life includes contradictions which later clash violently. While it displays a frank confidence in our intellectual capacity, and in the victory of courageous action, this bouyancy does not overleap itself in presumptuous self-assertion; on the contrary, man here recognises that he is subject to a higher order, and willingly acquiesces in the prescribed limits. Again, he is summoned to supreme effort and to ceaseless activity, but the activity attains at its height a self-poise which protects him from the daily turmoil and sheds a pure joy over existence. Everywhere there should be system and organisation, nothing should be isolated, nothing dissipate itself; yet the organised systems do not repress or destroy individuality, but give it a more secure place and a higher worth within the whole.

This union of all the principal tendencies and contrasts of

life in a readily intelligible whole makes the view of life of the classical thinkers incomparable and irreplaceable. For the progress of civilisation has steadily dispersed the forces of life, steadily increased the outward obstacles, the inner complications, and the sharpness of contrasts. But we cannot relinquish the effort for unity—that would be suicidal; hence we shall always look back gladly to a view of life which vividly presents to us, as a realised fact, the ideal of wholeness. The particular form in which this Hellenic ideal was worked out has, of course, been rendered invalid by the great changes of history: the pre-suppositions, which seemed safely to bear the weight of the old system of life, have been found to contain difficult problems; the connection with reality and the starting-point of trustworthy constructive work, which a naïver condition of life believed to be ready to hand, or at least easily attainable, we must attain by laborious effort, and by profound changes both in the world of things and in ourselves. But, for all that, the ancient ideals retain their full historical truth, and the ancient mind its loftiness; and these will ever attract, stimulate, and delight us.

The perennial charm and suggestiveness of the Hellenic ideal of life are mainly due to the historical position of the ancient world at the inception of European civilization. Since the problem of life was then first taken hold of by science, the constructive handling of it had full originality. The freshness and joy which belong to the first perception—the discovery—of a thing; the naïveté of sentiment; the simplicity of description; all are found quite unobscured at such an absolute beginning. On the other hand, the discursive extensions, the added reflections, which almost inevitably appear in later treatments, are absent. Much, once here said, is said for all time; it can never again be said so simply and so impressively.

Hence, in spite of the mortality that clings even to them, the ancient thinkers remain the teachers and educators of mankind. In work and in the recreations of life, in happiness and in sorrow, humanity has ever returned to them, as to heroes of the spirit; they hold up before us imperishable ideals, and usher us



into the rich world of classical antiquity, which awakened all human interests, embraced all activities, knew the joy of creating, loved vivid form, glorified nature, and possessed the inexhaustible vigour of youth.

## B. POST-CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

In recent times, historical research has thrown a much more favourable light upon the period of later antiquity; but the lay mind still often refuses it due recognition, because it does not view it in its historical perspective but measures it by extraneous standards. At one time it is represented as a mere preliminary to Christianity, and hence as something immature and incomplete; at another, as the mere end and echo of the classical period, and thus likewise as inferior. In both cases, an extended epoch, full of inner movements and changes, is treated as a homogeneous whole, and summarily disposed of. The fact is, however, that it is precisely the views of life of later antiquity which give evidence of an independent and individually valuable character; they even require a division of the whole period into two, one filled with the calm work of civilisation, the other with religious agitation. The philosophy of the former may be characterised as rational worldly wisdom, that of the latter as speculative and mystical exaltation. It is principally this antithesis which gives to later antiquity a characteristic intensity.

### I. THE SYSTEMS OF WORLDLY WISDOM

#### (a) *The Intellectual Character of the Hellenistic Period*

The post-classical period, which is customarily called the Hellenistic, lacked the principal motives of the classical view of life, namely, the stupendous creative work and the co-operation of all forms of effort in and through the native city-state. This state, indeed, outwardly preserved the traditional forms for a considerable time, but the life had vanished from them; national destinies were now decided elsewhere, particularly at



the courts of princes, while petty states shrivelled up into dreary *bourgeois* communities. Politics thus loses its connection with the activity and sentiment of a larger body, and becomes the affair of a few prominent individuals. At the same time, the citizen gains freedom in his relation to the community; he is no longer supplied by it with settled convictions; nor do the faith and customs of his countrymen fetter him and prevent him from choosing his own paths. On the other hand, life now oversteps national barriers; a cosmopolitan sentiment arises and, even if it is not characterised by all the storm and stress of modern cosmopolitanism, it still tends, by the kindling of more refined emotions, to bring about a reconstruction of relations.

Ancient cosmopolitanism found its chief support in a new trend of life, in the development, namely, of an erudite culture, and in the associations of literary learning. As contrasted with the classical age, what followed was a complete revolution. There man felt himself dependent upon the universe and also inwardly at one with it; but perfect fellowship and the highest realisation of his own being were to be won only by severe struggle; yet in the conflict man attained to heroism, and his work rose to the plane of original creation, the production of new realities. This period of intellectual heroism is now closed. The individual no longer recognises himself as in sure relation with the universe, and as kin in being with the deepest things in reality. Rather, the general consciousness is dominated by the conviction that between man and the world lies a deep chasm which only arduous toil can bridge, and then but imperfectly. The subject being thus thrown back upon himself, the inner character of life also is changed; a large place is now assigned to reflection and to mood; the inner life of the individual becomes the chief abode of the spirit.

Such reflection and brooding would shortly have plunged the subject into vacuity, had not the classical age handed down to him a splendid culture. The assimilation and utilisation of this culture now constitutes the substance of his life. At the same

time, scholarship becomes the basis of urbanity and all the higher accomplishments; study and knowledge alone procure a share in spiritual goods; they also produce a special fellowship of men; cultivated society detaches itself more sharply from the people, and elevates its members above all national and class distinctions. There results a cosmopolitanism of scholarly labour and literary cultivation.

In such diligent and specialised work, through which there flows the stream of a silent joy springing from the incomparably rich and beautiful classical culture, the age finds its full satisfaction. As its pursuit of new aims is not passionate, so it does not assail the barriers of human existence; so, too, it knows nothing of the depths and the conflicts of the religious problem. Among the people, indeed, religion is fostered, and continually puts forth new shoots; but the cultivated man knows how to make terms with it after the rationalistic fashion, and feels no deeper religious need. The ethical core of the Greek faith, the belief in a retributive justice, is not surrendered; but in these times, which exhibit such stupendous catastrophes, and such remarkable reversals of individual fortune, there develops with peculiar force a belief in the power of the goddess Tyche, *i. e.*, either a completely blind chance or one possessed by envy and malice. But even if the impression of the irrationality of human fate should grow, and oft compel a sentimental resignation, still man is not so overwhelmed and terrified by evils as not to look for an adequate remedy in calm reflection and thoughtful prudence; and it is particularly philosophy from which these are to be expected.

In all the foregoing developments the later age shows itself pitched in a much lower key than the classical; in intellectual power, in fact, it falls far behind its predecessor. But that its direction of attention to the individual, and its more vigorous unfolding of the inner life, constitute a valuable innovation, appears with special distinctness from the views of life set forth by the philosophers. Also, let it be remembered that the several sciences now first attain full independence and extend their in-

fluence far and wide, that in technical capacity man acquires far more power over things, that plastic art brings subjective emotion to increased, indeed to exaggerated, expression, that the drama finds an inexhaustible material in the relations of middle-class life, and finally, that the idyl and the portrayal of manners flourish. In every respect the individual attains greater freedom and consideration. The fact that "the Hellenistic poets first elevated love to the rank of the chief poetic passion" (Rhode) testifies to the growth of individual life and to the existence of a refined, but self-occupied, self-complacent sentiment; so does the other fact that, in marked contrast with a decadent civilisation, there here first dawns a sentimental joy in nature, a longing for simple rural conditions, and for a purer life amid their beneficent influences.

In all this we may recognise an approach to certain modern tendencies; and, in fact, in several instances an historical connection is unmistakable. Yet, notwithstanding the similarity, there remains a wide divergence. The unfolding of the later life of Hellenism is much tamer, more prosaic, and also, it is true, more moderate, than that of the modern world. While here the individual, with the self-conscious vigour of youth, rises superior to the world, and would fain draw it wholly within his grasp, indeed, shape it to his own will, man in the Hellenistic epoch looks upon the world as something unalterable; he attempts no changes in the traditional culture, he aims only to give it a new direction, by connecting it more forcibly with his subjective feeling and reflection. This difference between an age which, if not venerable was yet becoming senile, and one which is fresh, aspiring, and exultant in its creative power, so alters all the manifestations of life that the similarity of the two never amounts to agreement.

Such an intellectual situation involves a characteristic philosophy. This does not strive for new glimpses into the heart of things, nor for a renovation of the whole of civilisation. But it holds out to individuals the promise of a secure footing in life and a trustworthy chart for life's guidance; it aims to help men

to happiness and to make them self-reliant; and for the cultivated world it becomes the chief instructress in morality. This practical tendency, it is true, comes fully into play only in the course of centuries and under the influence of the Romans; it is not given undue prominence in the merely fragmentary records we possess of the early movement. Undeniably, however, at a time subsequent to the classical systems the individual and his craving for happiness form the pivot about which everything revolves.

It is also significant of the change that now a small number of convictions are at once formulated into a dogmatic creed which thenceforth persists through a number of centuries, while previously every achievement of thought immediately called forth further developments and also reactions. What the general intellectual life of the Hellenistic age shows in a striking manner the philosophy also exhibits, namely, that the great epoch-making heroes, with their high-souled aims of regenerating humanity, are replaced by aggregates of individual powers, by the formation, that is, of small societies of the nature of sects. Accordingly, as the plan of this work necessitates comparative brevity, we shall be justified in confining ourselves to the two principal schools of the Stoics and the Epicureans. The contrast they present corresponds to the twofold relation which man, once he has ceased to be a part of the world, may assume toward it. Either he may boldly defy the world, or he may make the surrender of himself to it as agreeable as possible. In the one case, he will seek for true happiness by rising superior to the influence of his surroundings, and by attaining, through union with universal reason, an imperturbable independence and an inner mastery over things. In the other, he will avoid all conflict with the world, and find his pleasure in a clever use of what life provides. Both tendencies have a similar starting-point, and they frequently coincide in their results; but in their attitude toward life they are irreconcilable, and the conflict between them lasts until the close of antiquity. It will be more expedient to begin with the Epicurean school, because it adheres



tenaciously to a simple, fundamental type through all the vicissitudes of centuries without becoming involved in other movements.

(b) *The Epicureans*

The Epicurean school displays in a marked degree the character of a guild or sect, little affected by the vicissitudes of time. The life-work of the master, Epicurus (341-342—270), exerted a supreme influence. Not only was the image of his personality retained as a living presence, but even the formulas in which he summed up his philosophy preserved from generation to generation their authoritative force. Besides Epicurus, we may mention the Roman poet, Lucretius (97-96—55), whose warmth of conviction and fervid style made him—as late as the eighteenth century—a favourite with circles affected by the Enlightenment.

The popular conception of the Epicureans is badly distorted. They readily appeared, and appear, as the champions of every kind of indulgence, while in truth their aim was merely to free men from all the entanglements of a responsible share in the world's work, and to provide them, within the sphere of a private circle, with a calm and serene life. The result was worldly wisdom of the fastidious sort that keeps everything vulgar at a distance.

Hence, as compared with the classical systems, the sphere of life is here narrowly restricted. It is not from any desire to understand the nature of things that Epicurus occupies himself with the problems which the world presents, but in order that knowledge may free him from the illusions which weigh life down and embitter joy. First and foremost he attacks the doctrine of an interference in human affairs by supernatural powers; for life can never be calmly and serenely enjoyed so long as the bugbear of eternity stares us in the face. Epicurus does not deny that there are gods; on the contrary, he reveres them as ideals of celestial life. But we are not to suppose that the gods trouble themselves about us and our world. They could neither dwell in perfect bliss, were they constantly occupied with human



affairs; nor, if they really exercised such providence, would the evil that pervades the world be explicable. That, however, we have no need to assume a divine government is shown by science, since this proves that everything in the world takes place naturally, and that such order and system as things possess may be sufficiently explained from their own nature. Thus, natural science is the liberator of man from the delusions and oppressions of superstition; it is the irreconcilable foe of the fear of the gods which has brought upon mankind so much hatred, passion, and misery.

But Epicurus rejects all philosophical fetters no less emphatically than the religious ones. The metaphysical bondage is represented by the doctrine of Fate, of a necessity that surrounds us with an inescapable compulsion. Fate, in fact, would result in a far more awful oppression than superstition. Self-direction and free choice are indispensable to human weal; freedom of the will, which was usually stoutly attacked, at a later time, by the gainsayers of a supernatural order, is here postulated as an essential condition of human happiness. Epicurus could hardly show more convincingly how much his concern about happiness hampers his theoretical studies.

A system which so scrupulously avoids all complications has no place for immortality. Why should we want to live on at all, since there is ample opportunity to taste every kind of good thing during our present life? Having feasted to satiety, why should we not surrender to others our places at the table of life? After all, life is conferred upon us only for use; with the expiration of our allotted time, let us cheerfully pass on the torch to other men. Death with its annihilation need not agitate us. The simplest reflection, in fact, teaches us that death can in no wise touch us. For so long as we live, death has not come; and when it comes, we no longer exist. Why, then, should we pother about it? Hence there is nothing to prevent us from living wholly for the present, and seeking our whole happiness in our immediate surroundings.

Such happiness, however, is not to be found without the con-

stant use of insight; this alone teaches us a correct valuation of life's goods. Things have a value for us only when they convey pleasure or pain. Human effort cannot set itself any other goal than the pleasantest possible life. "The beginning and end of blissful life" is pleasure. But let not pleasure be blindly seized, just as it falls to us; it is not the first impression, but the full issue with all its consequences, that decides upon the worth of any experience; the consequences must be weighed and considered; and it requires art to estimate and measure pleasures. What else can supply this art but philosophy?

Thus philosophy is converted into the art of life, in fact, into the technique of enjoyment. In appearance the task is not very intricate; but the difficulty increases with the execution, owing to the limitless resources of civilisation and to the taste of cultivated people. Indulgence in pleasure must be refined by a process of selection—not to satisfy any moral appraisal, but in the interest of happiness itself. Thus, spiritual joys are to be preferred to sensuous ones; inner goods to external, as being the purer and more lasting; and the control of the mind over enjoyments, the being able to enjoy without being compelled to indulge, yields more happiness than the slavish dependence upon pleasures. In fact, it is less the things, than himself, the cultivated person, in the things, that a man enjoys; and the highest aim of all is less a positive pleasure than a freedom from pain and excitement, a serene peace, an unassailable repose of soul. But for this is needed moderation in the indulgence of appetite, and a proved clearness of vision and nobility of sentiment. For, "one cannot live agreeably without living intelligently, beautifully, and justly; nor intelligently, beautifully, and justly without living agreeably; for the virtues are intertwined with an agreeable life, and an agreeable life is inseparable from the virtues" (Epicurus). But the principal source of happiness will ever be the correct estimate of things, the liberation from the fear of the gods and from the dread of death, the knowledge that the good, rightly understood, is undoubtedly attainable, that pain, when severe, is usually brief, and when it lasts long, not

sharp. A man with such convictions will "be disquieted neither awake nor asleep, but will live like a god among men." This view is developed into an elaborate doctrine of virtue, expressed in fastidious ethical maxims. Many of Epicurus's sayings were held in high esteem even by his opponents, and have been incorporated into the common store of worldly wisdom. That even this philosophy of pleasure is designed to make men superior to outward circumstances appears from the saying of Epicurus, that it is better for intelligent action to meet with misfortune than for imprudence to meet with success.

The Epicurean demand that the individual should be completely independent gives a peculiar form also to the recognition of social relations. Man is warned against forming any ties, on account of the inevitable complications. Thus, the Epicurean philosopher regards civic life with cold indifference. And in order to insure his immunity from that quarter, he advocates the absolute form of government. Likewise, marriage cannot attract him. So much the more, he advocates the free relations of individuals, such as friendship, intellectual intercourse, and philanthropy. And this movement was not confined to a small circle; its organising power extended far and wide. "Epicurus and his disciples proselytised, and closely organised their society. It extended throughout the whole of Greece, a state within a state, having a fixed constitution, and held together not only by correspondence and itinerant preaching, but by the interchange of material assistance. Epicurus knew how to create an *esprit de corps* which has rightly been likened to that existing in the early Christian communities" (Ivo Bruns). Thus philosophy recognised that it had an important task to perform even in this field, namely, to bring together into new societies resembling religious communities the individuals which had been scattered like atoms by the breaking up of the old orders, and so to give them moral and religious support.

But the effort to do justice to the Epicureans must not blind us to their narrow limitations. With them, man accepts the

world as an established order, and adroitly and shrewdly accommodates himself to it; an active, integral part of it, he never becomes. Rather, in order to make sure of unalloyed happiness, he shuns all the turmoil and uncertainty of co-operative effort, and retreats within himself. Since, however, he considers only his own state of feeling, the inwardness into which he has withdrawn reveals to him no new world, nor are there any impulses or capacities produced which might arouse and develop his soul. This plan of merely utilising existing capacities offers nothing by way of compensation for all the inner and outer losses, except the reflection that at bottom evil is weak and the good strong; in other words, it cannot do without a large optimism; and, in fact, Epicurus adheres to optimism with all his strength. But, suppose that unreason and suffering cannot be so easily silenced? Then the anticipated bliss of the wise man may quickly turn into an inner vacuity, into a hopeless pessimism. Furthermore, such a view of life implies presuppositions which it cannot itself justify, which, taken strictly, contradict it. It implies a highly developed state of civilisation, refined taste, and noble sentiment, a joy in the good and the beautiful; without all these life would become empty or rude. But Epicureanism does not tend to produce such a civilisation by its own toil and sacrifices: for the sensuous, natural being, above which its conceptions do not rise, there is arbitrarily substituted a cultivated personality swayed by moral and intellectual interests. Thus this view of life feeds as a parasite at strangers' tables; the labour of others must create what it forthwith appropriates to its own enjoyment, or, in meditation, resolves into maxims of prudence. Although Epicureanism may thus offer much to the individual at particular epochs, on the whole it cannot inspire or produce anything; it remains a mere side-issue, a phenomenon accompanying a mature, indeed an over-mature, civilisation; and, as such, we must expect it constantly to reappear in some new guise, and to find adherents. But all the shrewdness, cleverness, and amiability it possesses cannot compensate for its fatal lack of spiritual productivity.



(c) *The Stoics*

Incomparably more was accomplished for the problem of life by the Stoics; their school also shows far more inner movement. Although pure theory was gradually forced into the background, Stoicism preserved throughout a consistent character; during the early Christian centuries the tendency toward the practical and parenetical wholly gained the upper hand; and the moral reformation which later antiquity undertook by reviving classical ideals owned the leadership of the Stoics. It must be our effort to bring into relief the common character which unites the various historical phases and the several individual peculiarities.

What the Stoa historically achieved for the problem of life was to give morals a scientific basis, and to elevate ethical problems to a position of complete independence and of recognised pre-eminence. In respect of morals, the Stoics did not merely further develop transmitted data, not merely consolidate more firmly existing elements; rather, an elaborate and specific doctrine of morals, such as they supplied, had not previously existed at all, not even in the Socratic school, *i. e.*, not in a scientific form. For, although the Cynics taught that happiness arises exclusively from excellence, they disdained all theoretical inquiry, and therefore were without any fundamental philosophical views: with such a beginning morals could not become a world-power. But, with the starting-point of the Stoics, it could; since for them there was no such thing as moral conduct without a foundation of theoretical convictions and a coherent system of thought.

Stoicism is more closely related to the classical way of thinking than the first impression might lead one to suppose; the principal difference is that the Stoics considered everything more in the abstract, and worked out their conclusions mainly by meditation. Thus, they regarded man as a member of the great world, only not as in so close and obvious a relation to it; the world as a realm of reason, but less as a harmonious work of art than as a system of logical order and appropriate arrangement;



man as by nature impelled and qualified to comprehend universal reason, but rather in general thoughts than as manifest throughout the infinite detail of the actual world. Even with this view, man derives the problem of life from his own rational endowment, from his faculty of thought. The universe is much too rigidly organised and too strictly self-contained for man's acts to alter the condition of things or to direct their course into new channels. But the thinking being can take up either one of two attitudes toward the world. It makes a vast difference whether one lets the world's happenings pass over him unfeelingly and stolidly, and performs whatever he has to do under the blind compulsion of its superior force, or whether one intelligently masters the world, inwardly assimilates it, comprehends its necessities, and so transforms their compulsion into freedom. Here is a point of intimate personal decision, which, at the same time, draws a line of distinction between men. Whatever must happen, will happen; but whether it occurs without us, and in spite of us, or whether it takes place with our concurrence, changes radically the character of life, and decides whether we are the slaves or the masters of things. In free obedience lies the unique greatness of man. "To obey God is freedom" (Seneca).

But we can find satisfaction in the thought of the world only when all doubt is removed from the rationality of the universe; only then has the will a good and sufficient reason to adapt itself to the order of the world. Hence an important part, indeed an indispensable presupposition, of the Stoic view is the justifying of the state of the world, the dispelling of the appearance of unreason which the first impression creates. It seemed, indeed, particularly in later times, as if the philosopher were called upon, like an advocate, to defend the Deity against accusations, and to recommend the world to mankind as something good and acceptable. Thus arose the notion of a theodicy, to which, it is true, Leibniz first gave the name.

In the working out of this principal thought, various lines of reflection cross, and also merge into, one another. In the first place, the idea of a thorough-going causal connection, of a uni-

versal conformity to law, was so energetically defended that it forthwith became an integral part of the scientific consciousness. This causal order, however, appeared to the Stoics as being at the same time the expression of a divine government; they argued that there must be a Deity underlying the world, since a universe, which has animate parts, must also be animate as a whole. Furthermore, the Deity has adapted the world to rational beings, and even included individuals in his care. Such evil as exists is only a secondary consequence of the development of the world, and even this subordinate result is turned to good by the divine reason. The unreconciled, even unreconcilable, elements in these processes of reasoning do not trouble the Stoics. For their convictions spring far less from any theoretical demonstration than from a faith which is indispensable to their spiritual self-preservation. They are strengthened and confirmed in this faith, moreover, by the practical problem it imposes upon them, since the solution of this absorbs their whole energy.

The contemplation of universal reason can lead us to complete freedom and complete happiness only if our whole being goes out in thought, and everything is excluded from it that would make us dependent upon external conditions. But feeling and the emotions cause such a dependence, since they involve us in all the turmoil and misery of existence. The chief reason for their influence is a false valuation of things. For the evils, like the rest, of the outside world, have a power only over the person who wrongly ascribes reality to them: "it is not things that disquiet us, but our opinions about things" (Epictetus). To overcome this tendency to put a false value upon things is itself an act that demands the fullest exertion of our powers. Thus, thinking itself becomes conduct; it is no mere theorising, but ceaseless activity, a putting away of all lassitude, an effort of our whole being; in a word, it is a thought-action which inseparably unites wisdom and virtue, in fact fuses them into one. This thought-action alone yields true happiness; whoever seeks for happiness in the outer world, and thus becomes exposed to the

impressions of things, whoever is bent on enjoyment, and so falls a prey to greed and fear, sinks into certain misery. Not only excessive emotion, but every kind and degree of emotion, all pleasure and sorrow, all desire and fear, must be put away by a manly soul. Adversity becomes even valuable as a training in virtue, which if unexercised easily falls asleep: it is a misfortune never to meet with misfortune. The goddess *Fortuna* customarily bestows her favours upon commonplace natures; the great man is called to triumph over great obstacles and great vicissitudes. One's attitude toward the griefs of others, as well as toward his own, should not be sentimental, but active; let us give help swiftly by deed, but not be betrayed into sympathetic lamenting and wailing which profits no one. Let perfect "apathy" rule, *i. e.*, not a dull insensibility, but an unmovable firmness, an elimination of all sympathetic feeling.

Such a liberation from the power of temporal destiny includes the right freely to cast life itself away, so soon as it no longer affords the conditions of a rational activity. Suicide does not appear here as an act of despair, but as a matter of calm consideration and as an exercise of moral freedom. And as the Greek thinkers made their lives conform to their convictions, so there were several of the leaders of the Stoa who met voluntary deaths. To the great majority of the Stoics death indeed did not mean complete extinction. Individual souls, they thought, will continue to exist until the periodically recurring universal conflagration brings them back to the Deity, the substratum of all things. But even the thought of total extinction contains nothing terrifying. For the mere length of time effects no change in happiness. The virtuous man possesses already, and for so long as he lives, all the blessedness of Deity.

Thus, in theory, everything fits easily and smoothly together; life seems removed from every source of danger. But the Stoics by no means underestimated the difficulty of the practical problem. With them, the characteristic joy in creative activity, which distinguished the work of the classical thinkers, disappears; existence acquires a profound seriousness, and life seems

filled with toil and struggle. The conception of life as a conflict (*vivere est militare*) owes its origin particularly to this source, whence it has passed into the common consciousness of mankind.

The thinker is called upon to contend first against his environment, which is dominated by the false valuation of things; so let the judgment of the multitude be treated with indifference, and let no one fear to use even the harshest paradoxes. Grave dangers arise also from the effeminacy and excessive refinement of civilisation; to this tendency the Stoics oppose a high regard for homely conditions, for the simple, indeed rude, state of nature. More zealously, however, than against external conditions, the thinker must contend against himself, against the perils in his own nature. For the deadly enemy of true happiness, namely, a compliant attitude toward things, ever lurks in his breast, and entices him to abandon his high aims: this enemy must be combated with untiring vigilance and invincible courage. Such inner courage becomes the chief characteristic of the virtuous man; perfect virtue is heroism, greatness of soul. The hero rises far above the average of his fellows; the destruction of the world could not move him; his conduct is a drama for the gods. But in his supreme eminence he isolates himself from men and things; he attains less a dominion over the world than an indifference toward it; he remains rather in premeditation of activity, in preparedness for conduct, than exerts his power in actual doing, in which it would be fully spent. The question inevitably arises, how many will actually soar to the height of heroes, how many will possess the power to liberate themselves? For the Stoics rest the whole of life upon this one point of moral power. Whither shall man turn, and on what shall he found his hope, if he becomes conscious of falling far short of the goal, and feels the helplessness of his own faculties?

So the Stoic view of life contains much that is problematical. Yet behind it all there remains, as a permanent service of the highest value, the discovery and development of an independent ethics. In the decision to rise to the plane of universal reason,



in the act of free obedience, we have the work of the whole, the inner, man; therein is revealed man's capacity to act as a self transcending his particular faculties, and to make his whole existence dependent upon his own deed. Such an inner deed is far superior to all outward activity. Inwardness thus attains complete independence; a depth of soul is discovered and made the chief aim of all endeavour. A number of important changes result. Self-knowledge acquires the sense of an examination and judgment of the inner constitution of man; conceptions such as consciousness and conscience become fully clear and attain a fixed meaning; and the worth of conduct is now determined by the disposition alone.

At the same time, the supremacy of morals is fully recognised. Notwithstanding all the paradoxes, we have here simple and unassailable truths. The morally good alone may be called good; compared with virtue, all life's other values are as nought; it alone gives true happiness. Likewise, the distinction between good and evil is accentuated to the point of a complete antithesis; all transitions and mediations disappear; throughout life man is confronted with an abrupt, Either—Or. And the decision is not according to one's mere liking. For above us reigns the universal law, demanding our obedience. Mightier than ever before rises the idea of duty, which now acquires a definite meaning and a distinct name.

But the conduct of life was not only spiritualised by the Stoics; it was also universalised by them in a manner new to antiquity. When the inner aspect of conduct is elevated to a position of supreme importance, all the differences among men pale before the fact of their common humanity. It is now both possible and necessary for men to esteem and to labour for one another merely as men; for it is not so much the particular state or nation that binds us together as it is the universal reason. In this way arises a humanitarian or cosmopolitan ethics. What the earlier Stoics taught on this point was actually felt and practically carried out by the thinkers of the time of the Roman Emperors. The idea of a fraternal community of all men be-



comes a power; the metaphor of the organism is extended from the state to the whole of humanity, and all rational beings appear as members of one body; human nature is respected even in its least worthy representatives, and the common humanity in an enemy is loved. Thus the conception of philanthropy, which was unknown to Plato and Aristotle, is added to the world's moral consciousness. All men are citizens of a universal empire of reason. "The world is the common fatherland of all men" (Musonius). "As Antoninus, Rome is home and fatherland to me; as man, the universe" (Marcus Aurelius). The growth of the idea of God increases the warmth of humanitarian feeling. As children of one Father, we should hold together, and fraternally love and help one another. From such a fellowship there flows a stream of humane sentiment even into the general conditions of life, where it tends to suppress slavery, and to promote the care of the poor and the sick. Emperor and slaves alike are included and united in the same forward movement. Now, too, a common natural law, superior to the special laws of individual states, is recognised and developed; and of its effects we have ample evidence in Roman law.

The Stoic view of things has a limitation, it is true, in the fact that all it achieves lies within a given world; it makes no attempt to establish a new community, or to marshal all the individual forces to a combined attack upon unreason. So far as the ancient world is concerned, the tendency toward philanthropy and cosmopolitanism remains a matter of individual feeling and conviction rather than becomes a general movement. But even so, it had its value; for it forms the beginning of all further development.

The history of the Stoa does not fall within the plan of the present work. But it may be noted that the progress of centuries has brought out only the more distinctly the unsolved problems and the defects of the system, such as the discrepancy between the over-wrought ideal and the actual conduct of men, the want of any positive content to life, the isolation of the individual, and the rigorous suppression of all feeling. Even in

earlier times there were not wanting accommodations, relaxing the severity of the strict principles; but these concessions only gave rise to fresh complications. By lowering themselves from the lofty ideal of life of the wise man to promulgate a set of rules designed for mediocrity, the Stoics became the originators of the precarious doctrine of a twofold morals; and by recognising any sort of an admissible supposition (*probabilis ratio*) as a sufficient argument, instead of attempting a strict scientific deduction, they introduced the ill-famed probabilism.

Yet, notwithstanding all the obstacles and limitations, the Stoa fought a good fight, and, particularly in the early Christian centuries, proved itself to be the nucleus of a moral reformation. No more than others could it ignore the fact that the times were altered, and that the problem of happiness was pressed into the foreground with ever greater insistence and passion. To the Stoics of the time of the Roman Emperors, philosophy became primarily a support and a solace amid the unrest and the miseries of the age; the retreat into the inmost self, the awakening of the divine that dwells in every man, promised a sure liberation from all evil, and the prize of pure happiness. Thought here soars above time and sense, to rest in the eternity of an invisible order. But all the soaring of the spirit, all the self-exhortation of the sage, cannot restrain an overwhelming sense of the emptiness and worthlessness of human existence. Thus we see, *e. g.*, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the last eminent Stoic, tossed hither and thither by conflicting moods. In the *Meditations*, which introduced the monologue into literature, he extols the glory of the world and the dignity of man. "The soul traverses the whole world and the void that surrounds it and its total structure, and it reaches into the infinity of eternity and comprehends the periodic re-birth of all things." Eternity may become fully present in human conduct. For in the deed of the moment the whole life, the past and the future, may be comprehended. So man should raise himself above all that is petty, and "live as upon a mountain." But the thought of the possession of eternity and infinitude may easily assume the meaning

that all temporal things weigh as nothing in the balance, and that there is no powerful motive to action. Nothing new is achieved, notwithstanding all the appearance of development. "He who has seen the present has seen all that was throughout eternity, and that will be throughout eternity. For it is all one in kind and form." "Whoever is forty years of age, if he but possess some understanding, has in some sort seen all the past and future according to its homogeneity." But where all eager interest has so completely disappeared, human existence is vain. "The world is incessant change and life mere opinion." Indeed, the admission of this futility appears to be the surest safeguard against every kind of unrest and danger; hence the disposition arises to represent not only life's sorrows but also its joys as wholly insignificant. "The whole earth is a point"; "Everything human is smoke"; "Human life is a dream and a journey in a strange land"; "Soon eternity will hide all."

Such moods tell of a languid and an enfeebled age. Where man thinks so meanly of himself and of his task the buoyancy and energy of life are speedily exhausted; there remains no power of successful resistance to life's inner desolation, nor to the sudden decline of civilisation. The age of the systems of worldly wisdom was, in fact, over. They had their mission in an epoch of richer and more luxurious civilisation. At such a time they disclosed to the individual the inner wealth of his own nature, and gave him a stay and support within himself which raised him above the vicissitudes of the world. They eagerly undertook the moral education of mankind; they not only produced writings which reached all classes, and exerted an uplifting influence upon beliefs, but they also afforded personal examples of living which inspired reverence. But a movement based primarily upon subjective reflection and individual impulse proved inadequate the moment the structure of civilisation began to totter and man had to take up the fight for his spiritual existence; in short, confronted by radical innovations, the systems of worldly wisdom broke down. Still, they produced fruitful results which extended far beyond their immediate circle and

their own time. Early Christianity drew in large measure from the Stoic ethics; the modern Enlightenment also fell back upon the Stoics; and, notwithstanding all the differences in intellectual conditions, such men as Hugo Grotius, Descartes, Spinoza, and even Kant and Fichte, display kinship with them. Not only have individual works of this school become a permanent part of the world's literature, but the whole view of life here developed has maintained itself in history as an independent type of a manly and dignified sort.

## II. RELIGIOUS SPECULATION

### (a) *The Trend Toward Religion*

The last great achievement of antiquity was a movement toward religion and religious speculation. We cannot estimate this development so lightly, as is still frequently done; we see in it far more than a mere decline of intellectual energy, or a loss by Hellenism of its true character. For even if the movement, viewed broadly, presents an unattractive picture, exhibiting much that is depressing and barren, in the background nobler forces, spiritual necessities, are at work; and in the end, creative activity rises out of the chaos to a height which had not been attained since Plato. The age was weary of cultivated life; and the religious movement shared in the general exhaustion. But the new tendency did not end in weariness. Rather, it gradually manifested an original vital impulse; the yearning for positive happiness, for the realisation and satisfaction of the self, which had been so long stifled, again passionately asserted itself. At the same time, the minds of men were seized with a vague dread, a tormenting anxiety, concerning the invisible relations of life and their consequences; hence a disquieting fear of dark powers and eternal punishment spread upon all sides. Man was shaken to the depths of his being; but the very shock itself called forth a faith in the indestructibility of his nature, and impelled him to seek passionately for new paths. Such a state of feeling could find no satisfaction in the systems of worldly wisdom with their



passive surrender to the course of the world, their reduction of life to calm contemplation, their repression of all strong emotion. Likewise, the last revival of ancient civilisation in the second century after Christ, with its return to the old standards of taste and its preference for formal culture, offered nothing upon the questions that then stirred men's hearts: all the outward splendour of the revival but thinly veiled its inner hollowness. With the third century the illusion also vanished, and there followed a sudden collapse. Even art, the most faithful companion of the spirit of Hellenism, now loses its power; the last prominent figure is that of Caracalla (d. 217).

In the third century, accordingly, the field was left wholly to the religious movement; after slowly gathering headway since the beginning of our era, the new tendency now burst forth in a mighty conflagration. And the third century also produced, and upon Greek soil, the only great philosopher of the movement, the sovereign-minded Plotinus. But properly to appreciate his greatness, we must first glance at his predecessors.

Philosophy, by sharing in the trend toward religion, again gained a closer touch with its surroundings. For, although the enlightenment of the Hellenistic period had crowded religion out of the intellectual sphere, it had not eradicated it from the usages nor from the hearts of the people. And now that an approach again took place between the cultured class and the multitude, the old religious tradition acquired a new value, although, it is true, not without the boldest revisions of the inherited doctrine.

But philosophy also possessed connections with religion in its own traditions. The highly cultivated were for the most part adherents of Platonism, the religious side of which now first attained its full development. Furthermore, Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines displayed a strong power of attraction; they kindled a longing for the liberation of the soul sunk in sensuousness, and offered in compensation not only an ascetic life, but a faith in miracles and divinations. To these were added powerful influences from the Orient, chiefly in the form, at first, of

curious and even repulsive cults, which none the less yielded a fruitful stimulus to the world of thought.

Thus there was produced a decidedly mixed atmosphere; old and new, absurdity and wisdom, mingled in it in confusion. The manner in which the various factors could be united in the same personality, and the leaning toward religion be harmoniously combined with a retention of the wealth of the old civilisation, is strikingly shown in the figure of the refined, serious, and gentle Plutarch (c. 50-120 A.D.). It would be difficult to find elsewhere such a happy picture of the religious moods of the age as is contained in his treatise, "On Isis and Osiris."

The new religious movement—also in this instance we must unite the various phenomena in a comprehensive view—exhibits above all an altered attitude toward the problem of evil. It will be remembered that the Greek thinkers showed a pronounced tendency to treat evil as a subordinate consequence of the moral order of the world, and that the Stoics in particular did their utmost to resolve it into an illusive appearance; now, however, a potent reality is assigned to it. Since, if God were the cause of all things, nothing evil could exist, the unreason of the world must have had some other origin; exaggerating an old view, sensuous matter with its unintelligibility is accordingly regarded as the source. Evil no longer appears as a force which willingly yields to the good, but as a hostile power dividing the universe in twain. The world becomes the arena of a fierce, irreconcilable conflict. The great cleavage which disrupts the universe is repeated in man; in him also reason and sense are ever at variance, ever involved in a feud. The more closely classical antiquity had interwoven the sensuous and the spiritual in a single life-process, the greater the determination with which they are now sundered. Disgust at the ever-increasing refinement of the sensuous life seems to have seized entire circles of people; it was impossible to go to excess in denouncing the same varied richness of life which had previously enchanted the Greek spirit.

Amid such changes, although at first silently and imperceptibly, the position and content of religion become shifted. While

at an earlier time, and even for a Plato, religion was closely connected with the intellectual life, and the entering upon a relationship with the divine was held to uplift all human endeavour, now religion begins to separate itself from everything else; it promises man a new and higher life, but demands in exchange the allegiance of his whole soul. Here there arises for the first time a specific religion and even religiosity. To turn to the Deity now means to renounce entirely the impure and inconstant world; all other aims sink out of sight before the one great summons.

There is a change, likewise, in the character and position of the Deity. Perfect Purity ought not to concern itself directly with a discordant world; a transcendent majesty is its due, a complete aloofness, an exaltation high above all human conceptions. But there exists at the same time a fervid longing to secure some form of access to the divine. Thus nothing remains but a mediation by intermediate powers of superhuman though subdivine character; hence the doctrine of spirits, which possessed a basis in the popular faith, and was also made use of incidentally by Plato, now attained an enormous influence and absorbed men's minds with a steadily increasing insistence. Man believed himself to be surrounded on every hand by such mediate beings, and to be everywhere dependent upon their help. But with the good spirits were associated evil ones, who tormented him and made him afraid; so that all his going and coming was encompassed by a conflict of invisible powers. In the view of the throng this fear sank to a vulgar belief in ghosts, and the heavy mist of superstition cast a gloom over the light of knowledge. Subjective emotion surged in the breast without restraint; the passions of a heart engrossed with its own happiness crowded out the calm consideration of material needs and the rational organisation of existence. In its stead there begins the development of a life of religious feeling. The idea of a transcendent Deity gives to human meditation a tendency toward vague yearning, and also at times the character of a dreamy hope; the immediate world becomes a mere preparation, the

symbol of a higher reality hidden from the common gaze. But there is no ascent to this world of divine truth without a complete purification from the sensuous; the subjection of the sensuous to the ends of the spirit no longer suffices; rather, its complete eradication is an indispensable condition of the highest good, viz., fellowship with God.

But, notwithstanding all the changes, the Greek character is still preserved in the fact that the fellowship with God is understood to be knowledge of God; for the Greeks never ceased to look upon knowledge as the essence of the life of the spirit. Still, the knowledge must be of a peculiar kind if it is to grasp supernatural or pure being. At first the prospect of success seems slight; since "for the souls of men, encumbered with bodies and passions, there is no sharing in the life of God; only a faint hint may be obtained by philosophical thought" (Plutarch). More confident appears the hope that what is hidden from our logical reasoning may possibly become accessible to immediate intuition in a state of "enthusiasm" or "ecstasy." In this state, where man ceases from all effort of his own, and becomes a mere vessel for the divine revelation, the divine light may reach him unobscured. This light illuminates the historical religion also, the "myth," and discovers in it a profound truth. For as the rainbow is a vari-coloured reflection of the sunlight upon a dark cloud, so the myth is a reflection of divine reason in our understanding (Plutarch). Thus the cultivated man, too, may hold the popular religion in honour; if he illuminates it through and through with the most perfect insight, he will be able to find the true mean between disbelief (*ἀθεότης*) and superstition (*δαισιδαιμονία*).

Accordingly, even in the religious movement a philosophical aim maintains itself, while in individuals piety and joy in knowledge are often harmoniously united. Nevertheless, in general, philosophical effort is not only outwardly seriously repressed, but it bears within itself the contradiction of forcing the new ways of thinking into the old, unsuitable forms; the movement fails as yet to transcend eclecticism and syncretism; it lacks an inner fusion and an organised development of the new bodies of



thought. This was reserved for neo-Platonism, or rather, for Plotinus.

Before we turn to him, however, let us briefly notice the attempt to evolve a religious philosophy with the aid of an historical religion, viz., Judaism. In the national tradition of Judaism, religion possessed a far greater importance and was more rigidly self-contained; it opposed to philosophy far greater independence. But, at a time of the triumphant supremacy of Greek civilisation, it was impelled to seek a reconciliation with philosophy, alike by the personal need of the cultivated man to justify his faith before the bar of reason, and by the desire, not yet eradicated by bloody violence, to make his ancestral religion the common property of all men. In this effort a place of special prominence must be assigned to Philo of Alexandria (c. 25 B.C. to 50 A.D.), who was the first to undertake on a grand scale the fusion into one whole of the faith of the Orient and the wisdom of the Greeks; in this attempt he entered upon a path upon which he has found followers for centuries. His own achievement is of a broad and discriminating character, but it does not rise above the plane of skilful combination to that of constructive work.

In the union of these two worlds of thought Judaism supplied a fixed body of doctrines and usages, an historical view of things, a community of an ethico-religious character, a piety already becoming inward; Hellenism, on the other hand, contributed universal concepts, a strong impetus away from the narrowly human toward the cosmic, a thirst for knowledge, a delight in beauty. In their mutual interaction, the Hebraic element received enlargement and a new intellectuality, the Hellenic concentration and a spiritual inwardness; but in the total result the opposing elements were forced together rather than harmonised.

Among the resulting changes in the view of the world particularly noteworthy is the altered position of the Platonic Ideas. For Plato, these were independent sovereign forms; with Philo, they become thoughts of the Divine Spirit. Accordingly, we

here not only have a unity as a source of all multiplicity, but the whole of reality is upborne and animated by a universal Spirit. Likewise, mighty movements were introduced by the fact that the powers mediating between the Deity and mankind were combined into the unity of the "Logos," the first-born Son of God.

As regards the view of life, the Stoic ideal of the imperturbable sage is fused with that of the devoutly pious man. Common to both is the withdrawal from the world and the concentration upon the moral aim. Now, however, the Greek element present in the new ideal appears in the desire for deeper knowledge, even of the Deity, and also in the desire to base conduct upon rational insight; in the denunciation of all the things of sense as unclean, and in the conviction that everything that shares in change sins. Judaism, on the other hand, contributes a more direct relation of life to God, a stronger sense of obligation, and an intensity of personal feeling. The whole of life here appears under the figure of a service of God; we may approach the spirit of sublimity only by perfect artlessness and simplicity of heart, just as the high priest lays aside his gorgeous robes and clothes himself in simple linen when he enters the holy of holies. And as the common relation to God binds men closer together, so the doing and the suffering of the one may avail for another; the sage appears not only as a support, but as an atonement, a ransom (*λύτρον*) for the bad man.

Peace and amity between the two worlds of thought could not have reigned in this manner without the introduction of an expedient to moderate the antagonisms and lessen the shock of their conflict. This was found in an allegorical interpretation of the belief handed down by religious tradition, that beneath the letter was hidden a spirit accessible only to profound insight. Such a procedure was not wholly new in philosophy. Plato and Aristotle incidentally made use of it, in order to bring their doctrines into harmony with popular beliefs; and the Stoics had treated the myth in this manner throughout. But the method first acquired considerable importance when religion appeared

with a fixed tradition and a compact doctrinal content, and when, in consequence, its collision with philosophy created serious anxiety. Now, however, the allegorical interpretation became a chief means of reconciliation; in fact, with its adjustment of individual freedom and general conformity, theoretical investigation and historical authority, it profoundly affected the whole attitude toward life. The letter of tradition was nowhere tampered with; it remained an inviolable canon. But the freedom of interpretation permitted philosophy to make of it what it found to be necessary; all the difficulties of inflexibility disappeared, and strictness of method gave place to the free sway of fantasy. In this process, present and past, time and eternity, subjective moods and objective facts, are constantly confounded; a mysterious twilight closes in about us, and life assumes a dreamy aspect. This dreaminess persists throughout the Middle Ages, and is dispelled only by the energetic conduct of life in the modern era.

Thus, in this instance also, Greek philosophy is operative beyond the national boundaries in spiritualising and universalising life. Yet everything that the Hellenistic period accomplished up to the beginning of the third century after Christ is mere patchwork; reflection and simple combination usurp the place of spontaneous creation; we have popular philosophy instead of systematic, constructive work. Plotinus brings the change; for in him there again appears a thinker of the first rank.

### (b) *Plotinus*

#### (a) INTRODUCTORY

In the whole line of great thinkers there is not one about whom the judgment of men has been and is so divided as it is about Plotinus, the founder of neo-Platonism (205-279). His truly great achievements are so inextricably interwoven with what is problematic, and even certainly erroneous, that complete concurrence concerning him is nearly everywhere excluded; more-

over, philosophy with Plotinus remains too much a matter of broad outlines; there is no advance from a general view of the world to exact knowledge; finally, his whole system is pervaded with the conflict between a soaring abstraction and a profoundly intimate emotional life. Plotinus, therefore, if his actual achievement be regarded, falls far behind the other great thinkers; but if we penetrate to the forces underlying his work and follow his influence upon the development of the intellectual world, we must hold him equal to the best. For then there appear, often concealed beneath highly questionable assertions, new and fruitful intuitions; in fact, even error now and then serves as the lever of important discoveries. Intuition constitutes the true greatness of Plotinus; and this is nowhere so apparent as in his view of life. The impression of supreme spiritual power which emanates from him increases in proportion as we realise how unfavourable were the influences of his age; these must inevitably have restrained the freedom of investigation, and fostered the doubtful and fantastic rather than the true and valuable elements of his work. There is, indeed, no more splendid witness to the power of the Greek spirit than the fact that Plotinus could rise to such a height of contemplation from such miserable intellectual surroundings. Moreover, the profound influence upon humanity of his work as a whole is incontestable; here we have in its original conception, and in the clearness of its primitive state, much that has moved mankind throughout nearly two thousand years. Particularly in his influence upon the attitude toward life, Plotinus is without a peer; here he marks the boundary between two worlds.

Viewed historically, his work appears at first as a continuation and completion of the ascetic movement which dominated later antiquity with steadily increasing exclusiveness. But it was with Plotinus that the movement first became strong enough to result in a new construction of reality and the creation of a characteristic view of the world. In fact, the trend toward religion here undergoes an ennobling transmutation of its inmost contents. Hitherto it had been dominated by undue solicitude



for the happiness of the individual; infinitude and a transcendent world were proclaimed merely in order to lead individuals from unendurable misery to bliss and to secure for them an immortal life. With Plotinus, on the other hand, the individual in his isolation appears much too narrow, insufficient, and helpless; there arises an ardent longing for a new life springing direct from the fulness of infinitude. The anthropocentric character of the process of life yields to a cosmocentric, or rather a theocentric, character. At the same time every effort is made to bridge the chasm between man and the world, between subject and object, which had dominated thought ever since Aristotle; this is accomplished by the transference of reality to an inner life of the spirit, by including all antitheses in a world process, from which everything issues and to which everything returns.

Plotinus's efforts are directed toward a consolidation of Greek culture and toward its defence against all hostile attacks by epitomising and intensifying it. What is peculiarly Greek again stands out in stronger relief; indeed, many a characteristic Greek conviction is now for the first time fully thought out. But we shall see how, in these completely altered times, the fullest development of Greek ideas leads to a total collapse; amid stormy movements the Greek character disintegrates with the Greeks themselves and a new epoch is introduced by their last great philosopher. Christianity experienced the direct opposite. Plotinus's mind was altogether hostile to it; and his assault was the more dangerous, because it took place in the field of its own strength, and was made in the name of religion. But, as a matter of fact, Christianity is indebted to Plotinus for furtherance of the greatest importance, since it not only drew upon the world of speculative thought extensively in detail, but also first found in the latter a general intellectual background for its spirituality and for the new world it proclaimed. With the exception of Augustine, no thinker exerted a greater influence upon early Christianity than Plotinus; consequently, the further history of Christianity is incomprehensible apart from his doctrines. Thus Plotinus experienced with peculiar force the contradiction which

human destiny not infrequently exhibits: where he meant to build up, he destroyed; and where he aimed to destroy, he built up.

(β) THE BASIS OF THE VIEW OF THE WORLD

Plotinus turns with fervour and eager yearning to seek God and the highest good above and beyond the immediate world with its inconstancy and impurity. Thus the conception of other-worldliness is here accentuated to the last degree; the School of Plotinus, in particular, revels in the notion of the supermundane, a conception which must have excited the amazement of an ancient Greek much as the idea of the superdivine would do a Christian. The connection with the tendency of the age is unmistakable; but what in general remained a matter of subjective feeling, of moral and religious yearning, became at the hands of Plotinus a reasoned conviction related to his theoretical doctrine respecting the nature of reality. With obvious dependence upon Plato, but with an individual development of what he borrowed, Plotinus worked out a doctrine which maintained that only being thought of as indeterminate—being that is absolutely nothing but being, and hence that precedes and includes everything—could form true reality. But the varied world of experience does not present us with such indeterminate being; hence it must be sought for beyond the world, and postulated as existing by itself in transcendent exaltation.

If, however, pure being in this exalted isolation is also to form the true essence, the sole substance, of things, there results a complicated and contradictory condition. What things present in their immediate existence is not their true being; between existence and essence, accordingly, there is here a wide divergence, even an apparently impassable chasm: this cannot be spanned without profound changes in the first impression of the world, and without a wholly new construction of reality.

But, now, pure being—and this is essential to the Plotinian conception—is identified with the Deity: to penetrate to pure being means also to unlock the deep things of God. Thus

speculation becomes religion; the triumph of abstraction ought also to still the craving for happiness. Herewith the opposition between pure being and its varied manifestations is transferred in all its harshness to the relation between God and the world. On the one hand, God exists in unapproachable isolation, inaccessible to appeals and thoughts alike; on the other, as being the sole reality, He is the Omnipresent, and that which is nearest to every one of us; in truth, He is nearer to us than are our individual selves, which belong only to the world of phenomena. Thus God is at once removed to the furthest possible distance and brought the closest possible. This vacillation between opposites which it cannot and hardly cares to reconcile proclaims the unclassical character of the Plotinian view of the world.

But such an extreme opposition cannot continue; the contradiction between God and the world, between essence and existence, must somehow be adjusted. Several solutions present themselves: of the thinkers who, like Plotinus, made pure being the root of reality, some resolved the world wholly into God, others God into the world. Plotinus himself—concealing rather than solving the contradiction—attempts a middle course, and ascribes to the world a partial reality, less than that of God, and wholly dependent upon Him. He then unfolds, by developing an early Greek and genuinely Platonic conception, the doctrine that all being by nature, and so above all the highest being, feels the impulse to create something similar to itself, to produce the completest possible representative of itself, not for any particular end, least of all a selfish one, but as a natural manifestation of indwelling goodness. But since the creature, too, receives this impulse to create, the movement propagates itself, stage is added to stage, until non-being threatens to outweigh being, and therewith progress encounters a limit.

Accordingly, the universe is transformed from mere coexistence into succession; a chain of life arises, a realm of descending stages. Each succeeding stage is less than the preceding one, for—so Plotinus, like most of the Greek philosophers, thought—the perfect cannot originate from the imperfect, the copy can

never fully equal the original, the higher must always precede the lower. But all later generation remains in harmony with the original perfection; whatever is real is good in kind, indeed divine. The lower, too, in virtue of its inner kinship with the higher, strives backward toward its origin; hence there issues also from it a movement extending throughout the universe, so that the whole of reality is involved in a cycle of occurrence. This movement is not temporal in kind, not a succession of individual stages, but a timeless process of essence and worth, an eternal becoming of the world out of God. Thus a diversity of ages exists only in the sense that there is an unending series of cycles in the realm of phenomena. Beyond all change, however, eternal being abides in transcendent majesty, itself unmoved, though the source of all motion.

There appears in such doctrines a strong desire to subordinate the manifold to a unity, to elevate human existence to the significance of a cosmic, indeed a divine, life. The energetic development of these tendencies meant a momentous historical change. From the outset Greek philosophy had taught the rigid coherence of all reality and had bidden man to submit himself to the universe. But the several spheres of life touched one another externally only; in his innermost being each individual was still thrown upon himself. Now, however, an all-embracing, all-penetrating unity became the source of the whole of life; each point became inwardly united with it; each particular thing must draw its life from it; for any individual being to separate itself from the unity in selfish isolation meant to incur the penalty of vacuity. Thus the narrow spheres are burst asunder and a boundless universal life surges through the wide expanse. But this universal life is through and through divine in its nature; whether we seek the good beyond the world or in it we come upon God; all the various channels of life are only so many ways to God; in each particular sphere there is nought of worth except that sphere's revelation from God.

Here for the first time we have a religious conduct of life based upon philosophy, a thoroughly religious world of thought,



a religious system of culture. But life, although one in its root, is divided in its development into two chief tendencies, in accordance with the belief that the Divine Being is active and accessible in a twofold manner, namely, immediately in His transcendent majesty, mediately throughout the whole universe according to its degrees of subordination. There result different, if kindred, realities and forms of life. The search for the divine in the world is dominated by the idea of a pervasive order and gradation. Each individual thing has its fixed position; here and here only it receives a share in essential being and perfect life; it receives this life through a revelation of the next higher stage, and communicates it to the next lower stage; it can accomplish nothing, indeed it is nothing, apart from this relationship. That is the fundamental philosophical conception of a hierarchy; but it is also the origin of a magnificent artistic conception of the world, in which "the forces of life ascend and descend and hand to one another the golden vessel."

Opposed to this line of thought is that of an immediate revelation of God beyond the world of phenomena, in a sphere where there are no copies, and the original perfection is everything. In this transcendence alone there is revealed the whole depth of being and the fulness of bliss. All mediation has disappeared along with the phenomenal world; here God is immediately all in all. This is the mystic realm; and it is just as much a contrast of, as a complement to, the hierarchical order.

#### (γ) THE WORLD AND THE LIFE OF MAN

At first Plotinus follows in the footsteps of Plato, and distinguishes matter and form as constituting the world's principal antithesis. Like Plato, too, he is filled with a strong antipathy to sensuous matter, which fetters us and drags us down. He views it as something thoroughly irrational, crude, and animal; a product of elemental, non-divine nature (recalling the old doctrine of chaos). There is no place for such matter in a world of pure reason; hence the coherence of reality is destroyed, and

two worlds originate, one of self-contained, pure spirituality, and the other of the lower forms of soul life, sunk in matter and bound to sensuousness. It becomes a duty sharply to separate the two worlds; and the sensuous is to be rejected not only in particular forms and in abnormal developments, but in every form and as to its whole nature. Asceticism, or the escape from sensuous existence, could not find a deeper theoretical basis than is here given to it.

The more sharply a higher world separates itself from the coarseness and darkness of matter, the more powerfully it develops its own character of pure spirituality. And spiritual life attains a more independent position, indeed an elevation to a self-dependent world. At the same time, there begins a shifting of all categories into the non-sensuous, the living, the inward; the transformation of ideas into purely spiritual entities is taken in full earnest; time is recognised as the product of a timeless soul; even space seems projected from the mind itself. The process of life is now no longer, as formerly, a commerce with an external although kindred reality; it is a movement purely within the spirit. Within lie its problems and achievements, the beginning and end of its activity.

By such a transformation the inner life outgrows the immediate form of soul life, and to the realm of the conscious are added the realms of the superconscious and the subconscious. Thus arise the three domains of spirit, soul, and nature—all of them stages of the world-forming inner life. In this relation, the lower is encompassed and supported by the higher, nature by the soul, the soul by the spirit, the spirit by absolute being. Hence the soul is not in the body, but the body in the soul.

Plotinus, however, is impelled to look beyond even the most general concept of inner life to an all-dominating chief activity. This he finds, in accordance with the old Greek conviction, in thinking and knowing. In fact, by tracing all spiritual being back to thinking, and by resolving even the stages of the universe into stages of thinking, he develops intellectualism to its farthest extreme. Thus Plotinus, like Aristotle, distinguishes

three chief activities: knowing (*θεωρεῖν*), acting (*πράττειν*), and artistic production (*ποιεῖν*). But thinking alone has genuine life; creating is a close rival, since its essence consists in filling being with thought; conduct, on the contrary, falls far behind. Only when executing a theory has it a certain value; for the rest, it is a mere phantom with which those may concern themselves who are not fit for theory. Thus intellectualism destroys itself by exaggeration. For here knowledge calls a halt only when it ceases to be really knowledge and becomes feeling. Thus the altered times force the Greek view of life to give up its own presuppositions and to destroy the relationships out of which it grew. But amid the dissolution it leads to new paths, and even in its downfall it proves its greatness. But the definiteness and plasticity which characterised the ancient conduct of life are now past and gone; upon the native soil of Greek philosophy the classical is transformed into a romantic ideal.

But what significance has man in this universe, and what is the purpose of his life? We find that no special sphere is assigned to him, nor is he occupied with any particular work. Life in common with his fellows, *i. e.*, the social sphere, remains wholly in the background. Human existence receives its content altogether from the universe, and is completely bound up with the destiny of the whole. In this, however, man finds a peculiar dignity, since he is enabled to share inwardly in the infinitude of the universe and in its aims and processes. Accordingly, there develops an incomparably higher estimate of the human soul. It is of like essence with God (*ὁμοούσιος*, the same expression which Christian dogma uses for Christ), and hence of eternal and boundless nature. "The soul is much and everything, as well what is above as what is below, as far as life extends. And we are each of us an 'intelligible' world (*κόσμος νοητός*)."

Man shares with the universe the contrast of a purely intellectual and a sensuous being. The human soul has fallen from pure spirituality and is encumbered with a body; that involves it in all the perplexities and troubles of sense; by a succession of

births it must wander and wander, until a complete purification leads it back to the world of ideas. Hence the first aim, preparatory to all further effort, must be severance from sense; this means nothing less than the uprooting of everything that binds us to sensuous existence, or a complete withdrawal within the spiritual self. In the execution of this aim there are not wanting regulations in the spirit of ordinary asceticism: thus, we should mortify and subdue the body, in order to show that the self is something different from external things. But, in general, Plotinus treats the question in the large sense of a man who does not insist upon the outward detail, because he is concerned above all with the whole and with what is inward. What he requires is a purification (*κάθαρσις*) of being, a complete alienation of desire from external things, an unqualified turning of the will inward. We ought not to succumb to the impressions made by our surroundings, but to receive with indifference whatever fortune imposes upon us; superior to mere nature, and to the behaviour of the crowd, we should parry the blows of fortune like sturdy athletes. Such a detachment from the material world and from all external welfare is at the same time an exaltation into the realm of freedom. For our dependence extends only so far as our entanglement in sensuous existence and its obscure compulsions; and it is open to us to abandon that whole sphere, and to attain perfect freedom in a supersensible world.

But this self-dependent spiritual life finds a substantial purpose in the gradual progress toward an increasingly coherent understanding of things; and the problem assumes varied aspects, since the chief domains of reality appear as stages in the work of life, and thus place man in a progressive development. Let us follow rapidly the steps in this movement.

#### (δ) THE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL CREATION

The lowest stage of inner or spiritual life is nature. For, according to Plotinus, even in the external world all form and all life come from the soul, which is active in matter as the



formative power; indeed, the process of nature is in its essence a soul-life of a lower kind, a state of sleep of the spirit, a dreamy self-perception of the world soul.

But the self-contained life of the soul stands free above matter. The penetrating acuteness with which Plotinus points out the soul's characteristics, particularly its unity and the self-activity of its processes, has also a practical application: the soul-life, namely, produces within itself its power and also its responsibility; it is not compelled from without, but decides by its own faculties.

In distinguishing the spirit from the soul as a still higher stage, Plotinus falls in with a strong tendency of his age. But whereas this tendency attained elsewhere only vague expression, at his hands it received a comparatively exact formulation. Peculiar to soul-life in its narrower sense is consciousness with its desires and deliberations. But it is impossible that consciousness should be the essence of the inner life and the source of truth; the fountain-head must be a world behind consciousness. For the activity of consciousness always rests upon a deeper foundation. When we reflect upon ourselves, we always come upon an already thinking nature, only it is, as it were, in repose; in order to seek for reason, we must already possess reason.

In a similar manner, Plotinus elevates the good not only above all dependence upon anything external, but even above the state of subjective feeling, maintaining that it resides exclusively in a self-contained, spiritual activity. In the first place, no independent value is ascribed to pleasure. Pleasure is always pleasure in something, and therefore it can never dispense with a basis in an object. The subjective state is a consequence of the content of life; effort does not produce goodness, but goodness effort. Moral excellence and happiness do not require reflective consciousness nor positive feeling. As we remain healthy and beautiful, even when unconsciously so, so we do not need always to bear in mind wisdom and virtue. The more we are absorbed in our activity, and the more closely our condition is identified with our own being, the more the feelings of pleasure and pain

pale, indeed vanish. For we feel distinctly only what is alien, not ourselves, not our own inmost being. Hence to become inwardly independent means to free oneself from the power of pleasure.

Plotinus remained true to the old Greek connection of happiness with activity; but we saw that he did not understand activity as a visible performance affecting one's surroundings. Hence, in his opinion, no outward manifestation is needed for the completion of virtue; else we would be forced to wish that injustice should arise, in order that we might exercise justice, distress, that we might relieve it, war, that we might show bravery. In truth, the inner attitude, the living disposition, constitutes a complete, ceaseless activity. Once more the extreme development of a conviction threatens to destroy its original form. The joyful, buoyant spirit of the Greek looked to activity alone for happiness. But the greater the obstacles of life became, the further activity had to retreat, until now it surrenders all relation to the environment, and becomes merely an inner movement of the being, a self-contained attitude of the mind. It has now no other aim than the comprehension of absolute being, the union of its nature with God; it makes man indifferent to the visible world and a hermit among his fellows. Furthermore, every impulse is wanting for the improvement of the conditions of human existence. Hence, also, the idea of the good soars in a transcendent region high above the world of practical effort.

Nowhere, however, is the change introduced by Plotinus so obvious as in the case of the idea of the beautiful. A predominantly spiritual character had been attributed to the beautiful by Plato; but a large sensuous element nevertheless entered into the elaboration. Plotinus was the first to take the conception in full earnest; and, as a result, he was driven to a wholly new view. Beauty, that is, cannot lie in proportion (*συμμετρία*), where thinkers had hitherto sought it. For then only composite things could be beautiful. But, even among sensuous objects, simple things please, such as sunlight, gold, and the stars; and, in the spiritual realm, relations of size lose all meaning. In

truth, the beautiful consists in the triumphant sway of the higher above the lower, of the idea over matter, of the soul over the body, of reason and the good over the soul; the ugly, on the contrary, springs from the dominance of the lower, from a suppression of the idea by matter. So taken, beauty rests upon the good, as that which has worth in itself; and it must never relinquish this dependence. The outward manifestation becomes incidental, since beauty does not arise from a union of inner and outer, but merely from the inner and for the inner. Artistic creation does not embody itself in the marble, but abides with itself; the external work, the visible performance, is only a copy, an impress, of the inner creation in the mind of the artist, and therefore inevitably inferior to it. This transcendence of inner activity implies that art is more than an imitation of nature. Rather, it should be said, that nature itself imitates something higher, and that art does not copy the sensuous form in nature but the reason active in the form; above all, however, that in virtue of the beauty inwardly present to the mind of the artist, art adds much from its own resources, supplementing the defects. Here we have unfolded for the first time the conviction that art builds up a new, ideal reality, opposed to the world immediately revealed to the senses. But this recognition of its higher mission did not lead Plotinus to turn his thoughts to art as an independent field. His efforts, even in the case of the beautiful, are much too exclusively directed to the fundamental relation of man to the universe, for him to be impelled toward any particular development or any definite formulation. Thus beauty bids fair to transcend art, just as truth did science, and goodness practical activity.

Consequently, in every sphere life is deepened, there is a free soaring of the mind above all material things, an unreserved spiritualising of all activity and creativeness. From being a part of the world, the life of the spirit becomes the sole support of the whole of reality. Yet it remains in remote transcendence, without a nearer definition, or any visible content. And from this transcendent height Plotinus is forced to take the last step,

to turn, namely, from the whole realm of mediate demonstration to an immediate grasp of absolute essence, to union with God.

(e) UNION WITH GOD

The problem of finding God in his innermost being forms in this system the supreme attainment of life. All revelation in and through the universe points indeed back to Him, as the copy points to the original; but now the aim is to reach immediately and in its entirety what hitherto had been attainable only piecemeal and by means of intermediate steps. Hence it will readily be understood that Plotinus's emotional nature, which hitherto has entered into his work only under restraint, now wells up rapturously and pervades his whole account with a passionate fervour. This last development means a return to ourselves quite as much as it does a breach with all that previously concerned us. What we seek is not far from us, and not much lies between it and us; it is in fact our own hitherto estranged nature that we seek; let us accomplish the return into our true and happy fatherland. But since we yielded ourselves to strangers, a complete change will be necessary, an inner revolution; the new cannot gradually grow out of the old, it must break forth suddenly. "Then may one believe he has caught sight of it when the soul suddenly receives light." Instead of a continuous upward striving, now it is calm waiting that is required. "One must remain in repose until it appears, and be only an observer, as the eye awaits the rising of the sun." In truth, he who would attain a vision of the innermost nature must close the outward eye.

But conceptions can communicate nothing of what immediate intuition discloses concerning the Divine Being; only what He is not can be told; any further affirmation remains a mere comparison. Even of the state of exaltation, of "ecstasy," only figurative expressions can give a certain idea.

But the Divine Being may be brought somewhat nearer by the ideas of the One and the Good. The strict notion of unity,



which is raised far above the unity of mere number, forbids every kind of distinction within the Supreme Being. Whence it is concluded that the Absolute Being cannot possess self-consciousness, or be a personality. But this only in the abstract. For yonder pure, indeterminate Being is in reality continually having an inner life attributed to it: the impersonal Substance transforms itself imperceptibly into the all-animating Deity; the absorption in infinitude merges into a complete surrender of the heart and mind to the Perfect One, and speculative thinking is lost in a profoundly inward form of religion. Thus Plotinus's world, too, is far richer than his abstract conceptions. Hence, likewise, he does not hesitate to identify the idea of the good with the Absolute Being.

But such difficulties and contradictions as remain did not disturb Plotinus in his full surrender to the Supreme Being. Just as the state of union with God immeasurably transcended all other life, so also does the happiness attainable in it. The possession of the whole world would not counterbalance this happiness; and from this exalted height everything human appears puny and worthless. The philosopher in fact revels in the thought of exclusive withdrawal into the transcendent unity, which is at the same time the root of reality. That thought here first displays the mighty power over the human heart which it often displayed later, and can ever manifest anew. To rouse men to aspire to this high goal now becomes the chief aim of philosophy. But in the case of a purpose which requires so emphatically the devotion of the whole being, philosophy can do no more than point the way; each of his own accord must supply the will. "The teaching leads to the pathway and to the journey. The vision is the affair of him who would see."

Thus we reach life upon the summit of mystic union with the Absolute. Plotinus himself regards this attainment during the earthly life as a rare exception. If the idea of God afforded us nothing more than this, it would but exalt certain solemn moments of life, not elevate its total condition. But, in truth, by

means of the work of reason the effects of this idea extend far beyond immediate intuition and result in a transformation of the whole of reality.

A powerful influence upon the whole of life is exerted furthermore by the conviction that in the Absolute Being all the contradictions of reality are solved, indeed that they finally merge into one whole. This has already been shown in part; but some other points may now be added.

The Supreme Being knows no movement in the sense of change; rather there reigns for Him a perfect peace, a perpetual repose. But notwithstanding its changelessness, the repose of the Divine Being is not of an idle and lifeless sort; it implies a ceaseless activity, it is the highest and completest life. Hence there are united in this Substratum both essence and activity. Also, all discrepancy between existence and its cause disappears, since the Absolute Being creates itself, is its own cause (*causa sui*). Consequently, freedom and necessity also coincide as one and the same. The Divine Being knows no chance and no uncertain caprice, but also no dependence on what is external and alien; He lives solely out of Himself. By an ascent to the Supreme Being, man too may share in such divine freedom, which means incomparably more than the mere liberation from sensuousness.

Finally, the problem concerning the rationality of the actual world attains from this supreme and all-comprehensive altitude a peculiar solution. The theodicy here offered to us has, indeed, borrowed many features from the Stoics; but what it appropriates receives a fresh treatment, so that it becomes the most important achievement of antiquity in this direction.—Plotinus does not in the least dispute that evil is widespread, but he holds that we can successfully combat it by making knowledge more profound. In the first place, man should consider the problem not from the point of view of himself, or of any part whatever, but from that of the whole; "One must look not at the wish of the individual, but at the universe"; "because the fire has gone out in thee, it follows not that all fire is extinguished." Accord-

ingly, all the lines of thought of the Plotinian system are laid under contribution in order to vindicate the state of the world: particularly a metaphysical and an æsthetic consideration proffer their assistance. Evil in the strict sense has no essence; in its nature it is not anything positive, but only a lesser good, a spoliation of higher qualities, a defect (*ἔλλειψις*) in the good. Even upon the lower levels of reality the good predominates; hence it is better that these lower levels exist than that they do not. They are further necessary for the reason that a manifold is essential to the perfection of the universe, since in addition to the higher there must be a lower. A statue cannot be all eye, nor a painting all vivid colour, nor a drama all heroes and heroines. Furthermore, although the individual parts of the world conflict with one another, the whole forms a harmony including all contradictions; also what seems to us men unnatural, belongs to the nature of the whole. Whoever finds fault with reality, usually thinks only of the world of the senses. But above this world thought discloses another of pure spirituality and ideality, which knows no evil, and even elevates and ennobles the sensuous world.

Thus the ancient Greek belief in the rationality and beauty of the universe is maintained to the end in full force. The last independent thinker produced by Hellenism holds to the conviction that what is needed is not the creation of a new world, but reconciliation to the present one by means of an enlightened intelligence. He, too, looks upon reality as the finished work of reason; here there is no room for great innovations, for a veritable history with free volition and progress due to individual initiative; in order to avoid all unreason, it is sufficient to penetrate to the foundation underlying the obscure appearance of things. Thus thought asserts itself to the end as the power which reassures man concerning his destiny, and lifts him up to the Deity.

The more, however, man lays aside his peculiar character and attains a life in the Infinite, the more human activity is transformed from striving to possession, from ceaseless progress to

perpetual repose. Rest in the Absolute, beyond all conflicts and contradictions, became, amid the confusion of the time and the sudden decline of civilisation, the highest aim. The immediately surrounding world now finds its principal significance in pointing the way to the higher world; it has its worth not in what it is, but in what it reveals as the sign and symbol of a higher being. It is owing to this symbolic character of the immediately actual world that allegorical interpretation possesses a profound justification. And the ascent from the sensuous to the spiritual, from the image to the truth, now becomes the chief movement of life.

Just as, in Plotinus's view, intellectual activity at its height passes altogether into religion, and religion rules over life, so it is principally religion that unites Plotinus himself to his surroundings, and also determines his position in the historical movements of his time. His attitude toward the Greek religion was entirely friendly, since his doctrine of the gradation of the Supreme Being through a series of realms was attractive to the popular polytheistic belief. And just as an exclusive monotheism had always conflicted with Greek feeling, so the strict unity of the deepest Ground of things did not forbid, even for a Plotinus, the assumption of intermediate powers, visible and invisible, in the realm of experience. Possessed of such a foundation, the ancestral religion appeared to be spiritually deepened and securely anchored; sympathetic minds could now hope for a revival of the ancient faith. Religious enthusiasm once again blazed up, only to die down quickly to a dull flame, and then go out altogether. Yet it was Neo-Platonism upon which the last attempt at a restoration (that of Julian), leaned for support; its conceptions formed the last weapons of dying Hellenism. Thus philosophy loyally bore Greek life company to the end.

The convictions which united Plotinus to Hellenism necessarily separated him from Christianity. His antagonism toward the latter centred upon points which are revealed in utterances directed against the Christian Gnostics. The chief criticisms of



their doctrines are the following: 1. The over-estimate of man.—Man is indeed united by means of his rational nature with the deepest foundation of things, but he is only a part of the world, and not only over him but over the whole world the divine sway is exercised. 2. The depreciation and materialisation of the world.—Whoever attacks the universe knows not what he does nor how far his impudence extends. It is, furthermore, radically perverse to ascribe an immortal soul to the least of men, and to deny one to the universe and to the eternal stars. 3. An inactive attitude.—What is needed is not prayer but effort. If we shun the conflict, the bad win the victory. Even in the inner life, the thing is to act, and not merely to implore salvation. Complete virtue, based upon insight, reveals God to us. Without true virtue, however, God is an empty word.

How far these reproaches are pertinent, and whether, in addition to the Gnostics, they apply to Christianity, cannot here be discussed. In any case they distinctly show that, in spite of all the changes, the old Greek ideal of life retains its chief characteristics; namely, the subordination of man to the universe, the personification, indeed the deification, of the powers of nature, the expectation of happiness from activity alone, the esteeming knowledge to be the divine power in man.

In reality, Plotinus is separated from Christianity even further than is implied in the above attack; yet, on the other hand, there exists a closer relationship than the antagonism between them allows us to perceive. In both there is a thoroughgoing spiritualising of existence, and a reference of all life to God, but less in a spirit of uplifting the world than of repelling it. But Plotinus finds the spiritualising of existence in an impersonal intellectual activity, Christianity in an unfolding of the personal life; in the one, all welfare comes from the power of thought, in the other, from purity of heart. This fundamental difference results in opposing answers to the most important questions of life. With Plotinus, there is an abandonment of the sense world, exaltation above temporal to eternal things, and repose in a world-embracing vision; in Christianity, eternity enters into

temporal things, there is an historical development, and a counteraction of the unreason of existence. In the former, man disappears before the infinitude of the universe; in the latter, he is made the centre of the whole; there, there is an isolation of the thinker upon a pinnacle of world-contemplation; here, a close union of individuals in a perfect fellowship of life and suffering. However highly we may esteem the content of truth in Plotinus's ideas, and the fervour of his religious feeling, we must still regard it as wholly comprehensible that the ever-increasing, mighty yearning for religion sought satisfaction, not in his direction, but in that of Christianity.

Plotinus makes us feel with peculiar force the profound contradiction which thwarted the efforts of post-classical antiquity, the contradiction, namely, that the development of a transcendent spirituality remained conjoined with what in reality was an inanimate, impersonal world; step by step the movement was obstructed by this impediment. It was Christianity that first solved the contradiction, by revealing a world corresponding to the religious aspiration of the time, and thereby guiding life's problem into new channels. How much Christianity itself owed to Plotinus, we shall consider below.

#### (ζ) RETROSPECT

We must again insist that it is impossible to do justice to Plotinus without penetrating beneath the work to the soul of the man. Unless we look beyond the first impression, nearly all his doctrines provoke contradiction, and only a world-worn, exhausted, and ascetic civilisation would seem in some measure to excuse them. A shirking of the world's work, an isolation from human society, a formless intellectual life, a magical interpretation of nature—all these can make appeal to Plotinus. True, there also spring from his mode of thought more fruitful movements: the emotional life of mediæval mysticism, and the attempts at a construction of philosophy from pure concepts, extending on into the nineteenth century, both point back to him. But his real

historical achievement is something apart from any of his particular doctrines, indeed is opposed to some of them: it is, namely, the destruction of the ancient ideal of life with its definiteness of form, and the creation of a new ideal of spiritual exaltation and soaring aspiration; the bursting asunder of all the fetters imposed by surroundings, and the substituting of the emancipation born of a pure spirituality; the subjection of all forms of activity to the control of a primordial, all-comprehensive Being. Although this is all merely tentative, it none the less prepared the way for a new view of the world and a new conduct of life; the individual had become too clearly conscious of his supreme autonomy as a spiritual being to make it possible that he should ever again submit himself to a given order in the capacity of a mere member. Beneath these beginnings, hidden by the rubbish of a world fallen into decay, there lay an abundance of vigorous germs which were destined to develop under more favourable circumstances into mighty forces.

Plotinus not only terminated, and inwardly disintegrated, the ancient world, not only supplied Christianity with liberating forces, and preserved throughout the Middle Ages, in opposition to the externalising influence of the prevailing organisation, an undercurrent of pure emotional life, but his ideas were an indispensable aid to the Renaissance in the struggle for independence of thought, and even modern speculation and modern æsthetics manifest his influence. Thus Plotinus has been an effective force in all ages; as a truly original thinker, he remains even to-day a source of large views and of stimulating suggestiveness.

The immediate effects of Plotinus's thought upon dying Hellenism need not detain us. The fusion of an all-comprehensive speculation with a deep emotional life, the interaction of religion and philosophy, were not bequeathed from master to disciples. After Plotinus's death the religious movement ran off into visions and superstition, the philosophical movement into abstract formalism and empty scholasticism. With the last burst of light in Plotinus, the creative power of Greece was finally extinguished.

*(c) The Greatness and the Limitations of Antiquity*

A résumé of the ancient views of life should fix attention, not upon particular phenomena, but upon the development as a whole. In this development we distinguished three periods: those of intellectual creation, worldly wisdom, and religious meditation and speculation. The post-classical period immeasurably increased the importance of the individual, and strove toward a life of pure inwardness. It was the first age to grasp the essential nature of both morals and religion, and to acknowledge their independent existence. In these important particulars, preparation was made not only for Christianity, but for the modern world as well. The valuation and treatment of the above-mentioned periods has vacillated considerably in modern times. When Humanistic enthusiasm brought into strong relief the difference between antiquity and the modern world, and sought to derive from the former a fresh impetus toward creative work, it was the classical epoch that fixed the attention and called forth admiration; but when men turned to antiquity for the instruction and culture of the individual soul, then it was the later epochs which had a powerful influence. In the period of the Enlightenment, the writings of a Lucretius and a Seneca, a Plutarch and a Marcus Aurelius, were in the hands of all cultivated persons. Since the rise of modern Humanism, however, that is no longer the case. But do not the more vigorous development of the individual and the intensifying of life which we are experiencing to-day bring us again nearer to later antiquity? So much is certain: the historical view must estimate antiquity as a whole; and its appreciation will only be enhanced, if, instead of staring fixedly at a single zenith of glory, as if this zenith were a miraculous gift of destiny, it looks with discrimination and discerns great movements and changes within the whole, and discovers everywhere eager effort and severe labour and struggle.

But all the differences of epochs do not rob antiquity of an



inner relationship and a permanent basis: the divergences are all within a common content of life.

For all the Greek views unite in regarding activity as the soul of life. The activity, indeed, takes various forms, and finds its centre of gravity in different spheres; in the course of centuries it retreats further and further behind immediate existence, yet ever remains the chief thing; it is always the criterion of the success of life. It is by activity that, for the most part, man knows that he lives amid great relationships and under the protection of Deity. But the origin and essence of activity lie with the man himself; his own force must awaken the divinity of his nature and guide it to victory over his lower self. Even in the perversions of asceticism and mysticism, the issue remained with man; his own exertion was to win happiness. Such convictions imply a firm faith in the power and nearness of goodness, and they clearly testify to a strong vitality, a joy in being, a delight in the unfolding of power. Here the multiplication of obstacles has not broken the will to live; certain kinds of life, indeed, are rejected, but in the rejection life itself is affirmed; complete extinction, in the sense of the Hindoo, is not what is sought. Even the ever-increasing desire for the assurance of immortality attests the power of the vital impulse and shows a tenacious clinging to life. Indeed, in the Greek hopes of immortality, there is far more a desire of prolonging the present than there is a conception of a wholly new kind of being. The philosophical doctrines reflect that focussing upon this life of the belief in immortality which is seen in the ancient sarcophagi, themselves already belonging to a period when life was overspread with gloom. For they clothe death with the varied wealth of life; they hold fast to existence, by ennobling it and elevating it into an ideal sphere.

From such a delight in life and in activity there springs a triumphant youthfulness; it is the fountain-head of that astonishing elasticity of mind which ever rebounds from the hardest obstacles ready for fresh achievements. Whatever life offers that is great and good, is seized and developed. True, such a vigorous

affirmation of life has as its reverse side a harsh insensibility toward the suffering and darkness of life. Impediments indeed are not underestimated, and the consciousness of them steadily increases. But life's wisdom is always found in the keeping of what is hostile at a distance, and in the raising oneself above the sphere of its power. On the other hand, what is hostile is not taken up into the soul of the life-process, and utilised for further development; no transformation, no inner exaltation, spring from suffering. This inner growth is wanting principally for the reason that Greek conceptions, while indeed conversant with the great problems of mind in its relation to the surrounding world, know nothing of serious inner conflicts; the dominant interest is in that relation, not in the mind's relation to itself and to its own ideality. Here there reigns a secure and joyful faith in the power and glory of the human mind. The intellectual faculties, just as we have them, are recognised to be good; all that is needed in order to ward off everything hostile and to subordinate man's sensuous nature, is their vigorous development and a clear consciousness. The view that the mind by the unfolding of its powers subjugates nature, and moulds it into an expression of itself, here forms the essence of life's work; hence it is possible for the idea of the beautiful to become the central conception of creative effort. No inner transformation is necessary with such a conception; there is no basis for a growth through agitation and suffering, a passing through negation, a resurrection through self-abnegation.

The intimate union of truth and beauty, of penetrating knowledge and artistic creation, which distinguishes all Greek work, characterises also the Greek views of life. Its profoundest aspect is the searching out of the essential and the eternal; this lends to life a secure foundation and an enduring repose, and also transforms the chaotic appearance of things into a glorious cosmos. The contemplation of the order of the universe with its perfected harmony, the joy in the "eternal grace," becomes the highest reach of life.

Such a view of life may satisfy man where he is either sur-

rounded by an imposing present, or his thought creates out of the change and flow of existence an eternal present. The visible, rational present had ceased to exist for Greek life; hence philosophy sought with only the greater energy to hold fast to an invisible one. But it had to make ever more powerful efforts in order to do so; the world of essence and of beauty ever receded further into the distance; ideas steadily lost perceptible content; human existence grew continually more empty. Thus it came to be a grievous defect in the Greek conduct of life that it possessed no power of building up a new world; that with its lack of the idea of progress, it possessed no possibility of a thoroughgoing reconstruction, possessed no future and no hope. The narrow confines of the world must have weighed upon man as an unendurable burden, so soon as the needs and wrongs, so soon, above all, as the inner emptiness of existence were distinctly felt.

We saw that the Greek thinkers fought against such dangers like stalwart heroes, and unflinchingly upheld the old ideals amid all the changes. But even they could not burst the bonds imposed by the common national character; the foundations of the Greek view of life were much too firm and unyielding to adjust themselves to the new demands; hence the time inevitably came when mankind turned from them, and seized upon new ideals. The possibilities of life within the sphere of Greek civilisation were exhausted; the decline could not be prevented.

Still, the realisation that decadence was inevitable cannot restrain a feeling of profound sadness at the extinction of so much intellectuality and beauty. It may, however, serve to lessen our melancholy, if we consider that the inevitable dissolution freed the several elements of Greek civilisation from the peculiar union which had thus far bound them together, and so enabled them to enter into new relations and to produce their natural fruits. Wholly typical is the heroic energy with which the Greek mind explored the height and depth of human experience, clearly and steadfastly pursued to the end all the directions which it took, and sketched in outlines full of genius repre-

sentative views of life, which exhaust the chief possibilities of human existence, and hence form permanent elements of the further work of humanity. Typical also is the spirit of beauty which pervades those views and irradiates from them. We have here in mind not only the lucidity and charm of delineation which distinguishes most of them, but also their imperishable realisation of the universal power of form, and the fact that by means of the beautiful a peculiar illumination of the whole of life is achieved. The perception of beauty becomes the type of all genuine intellectual life; as, in the sphere of beauty, a secure repose unites with ceaseless movement; indeed, is repose in the midst of movement, so the same harmony is set before all the aspects of life as an ideal. Just as beauty pleases in itself, and not on account of anything it does, so intellectual labour is undertaken for itself, not on account of any use to which it may be put. And the good is desired for the sake of its inner beauty, without any thought of reward, and evil rejected as being in its nature ugly. Thus there gradually detaches itself from the ancient views we have considered the picture of a thoroughly refined life, at once strong and temperate and upborne by the deep seriousness of a joyful faith.

We saw that it was necessary for the whole ancient scheme of life to dissolve, in order to prepare for new forms. But that does not mean that it may not forever attract and stimulate us. For the ancient conduct of life possesses an incomparable and imperishable character in the fact that it develops with youthful freshness the simple, healthy, natural view of things; and that in it the first impression of the human state, its experiences and conditions, are reflected in perfect purity. Even though the experiences of adversity and the revelation of hitherto unknown depths have carried us beyond that first impression, we are always being forced to come to terms with it anew, indeed, we must appropriate it as a part of our own life, if the further development is to retain its plasticity and truth. Thus antiquity can the more readily render us an invaluable service, because, with the working out of a natural view of things, it at the same



time transcends that view. For its own movement inevitably brings on a crisis and catastrophe: the inner spirit, which it develops in ever-increasing strength, at length necessitates the severance of the ties binding it to the old body, and destroys all the old presuppositions. Antiquity is thus comparable to a tragic hero who, by his very downfall, upholds and gives fresh strength to the cause for which he wrought. So, here, out of all the confusion of the historical situation there shines forth with ever-increasing distinctness a world of pure inwardness; in it the truth of the old world also may find an imperishable resurrection. Hence, although something temporal is lost, the eternal abides, and even upon the stage of history a new life rises out of the ruins of the old.

*PART SECOND*  
CHRISTIANITY



# CHRISTIANITY

## A. THE FOUNDATION

### I. THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

#### (a) *Introductory Considerations*

SOME sort of consideration of the general character of Christianity is indispensable as an introduction to the views of life which have grown up on Christian soil. First of all, however, we must examine the question whether these views of life actually spring from the Christian religion, or merely accompany it as the product of other factors. Without doubt, a religion is not primarily a view of the world and of life, a doctrine of divine and human things. Rather, it is the creation of a distinctive world of reality, the development of a new life under the dominant conception of a higher sphere. The life that here grows up is conscious of being raised far above mere doctrine, and it will at all times stoutly defend its independence of the latter. But it could not be of an enlightened sort without possessing in itself and developing from itself convictions respecting the sum-total of human existence. Every higher religion brings about an inversion of the immediate world, and changes the standpoint of life. It does not rest upon metaphysic, it is itself a sort of metaphysic, the revelation of a new, a supernatural world. Such a complete change is impossible without an effort of the whole man, without a decision affecting the whole of his being, and the change cannot justify itself, either to the man himself or to others, unless this decision is translated into thoughts, unless the type of life is developed into a view of life.

This necessity is not to be evaded by confining religion to a



particular sphere, by treating it as something which offers the individual a refuge from trials, but which leaves untouched the whole of the intellectual life and the work of shaping civilisation. Not even as an individual could man find support and contentment in a detached religion. For in virtue of his intellectual nature, in virtue of his implication in the destiny of the world, both his experience and his activity have reference to the universe; hence he can find no rest for himself without being at peace with the world. Every attempt on the part of religion to intrench itself within a separate sphere exposes it sooner or later to the suspicion of not possessing the full truth, of not being worthy of the allegiance of our souls. As a matter of fact, every religion proclaims its teaching, not as co-ordinate with other truths, but as the very core and centre of all truth, as that which far transcends all else. But even this estimate necessarily implies a view of the universe. Furthermore, religion could not assume the position of the chief concern of life without expanding its own content into a world. Thus, for example, if it finds that content altogether in morals, then moral conduct not only develops simultaneously with it into a harmonious whole superior to all distraction, but also into the expression of a new world transcending all the activity of the world of experience; it becomes of itself a metaphysic. Accordingly, since religion is always an affirmation respecting the last things, it cannot do without the formation of corresponding views of life.

But do we find so much affinity between the various forms and aspects of Christian belief that we can speak of a view of life common to Christianity? Manifestly, no other religion has departed so far from its beginnings, nor become in itself so deeply disrupted, as Christianity. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to defend the uniformity of its character, particularly by two opposite lines of argument. One makes a touchstone of the earliest form of Christianity, and in the later developments admits the genuineness only of what agrees with that form; the other finds the bond of union in the historical continuity; it holds by the immediate sequence of one form from another, and

accordingly must accept as Christian everything which belongs to the succession. Each of these methods doubtless possesses a certain justification; but, taken alone, neither will suffice. The first criterion is too narrow, the second wholly unreliable. Like each of the phases of the development, the beginnings contain much that belongs to the general conditions of the age and to the state of intellectual progress at the time; and it would be impossible to confine all movement within these early limits, and prevent every effort to rise above them. Still less will it do simply to go to an extreme with the history; for Christian history was by no means determined solely by the proper exigencies of religion; it may very well be that other factors outweighed those of religion, and that in the accommodation to human affairs the best part of its content was sacrificed. The dilemma vanishes only upon our realising that, in spite of all the distortion on the part of man, historical phenomena and movements have an eternal truth, a central fact of spiritual life, underlying and working through them with indestructible power. Only such a super-historical truth can hold history together; only to such a truth can we perpetually recur without sacrificing the living present to the past. Hence it is necessary to separate the intellectual substance of religion from the human modifications of its form, if we would possess a common groundwork of truth with which to confront every kind of disunion and hostility.

Such a groundwork is clearly enough recognisable in Christianity, particularly when it is compared with other religions. Thus, it is not a religion of law but of salvation; and as such it is not content merely with organising and stimulating existing forces, but demands a wholly new world and completely regenerated men. Furthermore, this religion of salvation is not of an ontological but an ethical sort; that is, its aim is not, like the religions of India, to penetrate beyond a world of illusion to one of eternal verities; rather it views the whole of reality under the contrast of good and evil, and demands a new world of love and mercy. Accordingly, all the facts and problems of life assume a distinctive form. Finite existence is not degraded by it to an

unreal appearance, but rather immeasurably exalted in significance, inasmuch as it teaches that the eternal enters into the temporal and there reveals its innermost depths, inasmuch as it holds that a union of the divine and the human begins even in this world. Such ends cannot be set forth by Christianity without an abrupt and irreconcilable breach with the existing state of the world, indeed with the whole natural order; nor without its reiterating the imperative demand for a new world. It thereby directs men's thoughts above everything visible and present to an invisible and future order. But this breach with the world is not equivalent to asceticism, nor does the demand for a better future mean an estrangement from the present. For the fundamentally ethical character of Christianity causes its spiritual superiority to the world to become at the same time constructive of a higher world. What the future alone can bring to full fruition is already present in disposition and in faith—more intimately present than the present of the senses; as such, it impels men with an elemental force toward the up-building of a new world, toward work on a kingdom of God in the very midst of the temporal misery of human life. Thus, in addition to inwardness and tenderness life now possesses activity and gladness.

These various features are closely interdependent, and taken together produce a thoroughly characteristic type of life. To be sure, the historical conditions force now this, now that side more into prominence; they may even cause the entire movement to deviate widely from the ideal view of the whole. But that throughout all change and distortion, throughout all complication and disruption, such an ideal is present and exerts a controlling influence, we must now attempt to show more in detail.

### (b) *The Fundamental Facts*

The Christian life finds its chief task, not in its relation to the world, but in its relation to God, the perfect Spirit; fellowship with God becomes the centre of all activity and the source of

all happiness. That God is, and that man stands in relation to Him, are here at least as obvious and certain as the existence of a world around them was to the Greeks. The process of life itself so immediately manifests the working of the highest Spirit that any special proofs of the existence of God appear both superfluous and inadequate; only the wish for an exoteric justification could invest them with a certain value.

In his relation to God man is completely subordinated; and in this respect he cannot lay claim to any kind of egoistic being. But such absorption in the fellowship with God, such surrender of all separate existence, is after all something radically different from the complete extinction of all individual being in the absolute essence, which is the result in mystic speculation. The Christian plan of life does not rob the individual of substantial being; rather, notwithstanding his subordination, it preserves, and indeed immeasurably enhances, his independent worth. For the infinite distance between the perfect Spirit and wholly imperfect man does not prevent an intimate relation and a communication of the fulness of the divine life. Such a communication from being to being gives rise to a new kind of life, a kingdom of love and faith, a transformation of existence into pure inwardness, a new world of spiritual goods. In contrast with the previous state, this new life becomes a serious undertaking; in its interests, there are endless things to do, to set in motion, and to alter. Moreover, it requires ceaseless exertion to maintain the height which has been reached. At the same time, fellowship with the perfect Spirit brings a joy and blessedness which far surpass all other happiness. Further, this life, in its inner superiority to all other experiences, carries with it the certainty that the Power whence it springs rules all the world, indeed is the origin of all reality. The spirit of infinite love and goodness, the ideal of free personal being, is also the all-powerful Spirit, the world-creating Power. As the work of omnipotent goodness, the world cannot be other than perfect, perfect not only in the sense that under given conditions the highest possible has been reached, out of given materials the best possible pro-



duced, but perfect in the strict sense of realising all the demands of reason. So, too, as regards man, we may have faith that the winning of that inner life includes, or brings as a consequence, all other life; that the omnipotent love is forming the whole world into a kingdom of God.

But the more completely reality is transformed from within and exalted, the harsher, the more unendurable, become the contradictions of experience; intimately connected with the all-important fact of the new life is the perception that this world is the source of serious hindrance and even of danger for it. Misery and unreason not only surround us without, they assail even the inner life, and evil appears not only as a mere limitation and diminution of the good, but as a directly antagonistic force and a complete perversion of it. A deep chasm divides the world; the triumph, indeed the very continuance, of reason seems to be threatened. The principal question is not, as with the Greeks, the relation of the mind to its environment, but its relation to itself, its attitude toward its own ideality, as determined by the fellowship with God. The ultimate ground of all evil is the rending asunder of that fellowship, the revolt and the disobedience of man. Here evil has its deepest root, not, as with the Greeks, in matter and a degrading sensuousness, but in free guilt; hence it is enormously intensified. The question how such estrangement and disobedience are possible, and whether in the end evil itself may not be adjusted to the divine plan of the world, has caused Christendom endless pondering and study. At the same time, there existed the strongest distrust of any protracted discussion of such questions, and an anxiety lest an explanation of evil might weaken the seriousness with which it was regarded, and hence also the vigour of the conflict against it. The result was that the ascription of evil to a free act was adhered to, while the question of the compatibility of a world devastated by guilt with the sway of omnipotent goodness remained unanswered. Thus the enigma of the origin of evil is left unsolved also by Christianity.

But the Christian life could the more readily allow this problem

to fall into the background, since it brought all its energy to bear upon the actual combating of evil, and since in its own inwardness it was lifted securely above the domain of the conflict and above all unreason. This exaltation it could not attain by itself; the world is too completely pervaded with unreason and too much broken in its spiritual capacities for that. Accordingly, there was no hope of reaching the goal by a slow ascent, a gradual accumulation of forces. Rather, the reinstatement of the right relation to God—upon which everything here depends—must proceed solely from the Deity; and even He cannot effect the restoration by an interference from without, but must descend into the world of conflict, and there break the power of evil, there reveal Himself more completely than heretofore. This takes place, according to the Christian view, in such a manner that God lays hold of the world, not by means of special powers and manifestations, but by the full plenitude of personal life, and rescues humanity from the power of evil by entering into the most intimate union with human nature, freeing it from all suffering and darkness by transplanting an innermost core of human essence into the divine life. But this inner victory over suffering and darkness cannot, according to the ecclesiastical view, be accomplished by the divine Spirit without taking the burden in all its weight upon Himself. Thus the idea of a divine suffering becomes for that view the profoundest mystery of Christianity. In the supreme crisis the divine Spirit seems to bow before the dominant power of evil. But the darkness endures not; the apparent defeat is soon followed by exaltation, the Spirit manifests its superiority by a complete triumph, and leads the good to final victory. At the same time it appears that only through such painful and extreme suffering could the whole depths of the new world be revealed, and the full security of the new life be won. Thus, the transformation is at first only inward; it appears barely to touch the visible world. Evil by no means disappears even now; it persists and opposes the new order. But its roots have been severed; it no longer has the power to prevent the upbuilding of a kingdom of God also in

this world. Such upbuilding is visibly aided by the new community of the church, which is exclusively determined by the relation to God; in the midst of an indifferent or hostile world, this community preserves the connection with the invisible kingdom of God, and unites men to one another in the closest manner through love, faith and hope. Yet, even after the establishment of the good in human society has been achieved by such means, life still retains the character of a ceaseless conflict; only the outlook into the future, only the invincible hope of a new world, bears us triumphantly beyond into a realm of peace and undimmed blessedness.

Thus we see the Christian world ascend through a series of mighty events, and at the same time win an ever-increasing wealth of inner life. The creative act of God, the Fall, the entrance of the divine Spirit into the historical order, the victorious exaltation of the good and the founding of the kingdom of God upon earth, the prospect of a better future held out to men until the Day of Judgment—it is the close connection and interdependence of all these facts and events that first brings into strong relief the unique character of the Christian world. The events are not a necessary consequence of a given world, rather all the decisive changes result from a free act; the act here anticipates the historical process, freedom becomes the deepest essence of the spirit. Reality does not now mean something plastic, a work of art fascinating the perception by its restful symmetry; it has transformed itself into a drama of mighty forces and upheavals; and this drama agitates men with a mighty emotion. For man is not to look upon these conflicts and vicissitudes as if he were a spectator at a play; he is himself to experience them in his deepest soul, to live them anew as his own destiny. It is of the very essence of the Christian life that what has been objectively and irrevocably decided by historic events becomes for the individual, in all its seriousness, an ever-recurring personal problem; that all the commotions of the conflict in the world extend with undiminished strength into the circle of his experience and form the soul of his life. Indeed, only the individual appro-

priation and confirmation of those historic events give them fullness of life and an irresistible power of conviction; as mere events, they could neither sufficiently substantiate their truth nor attain a triumphant power of conquest. Thus the historical and the subjective, the macrocosmic and the microcosmic, are here mutually dependent; they reciprocally imply and set in motion and sustain one another. Even this cursory synopsis shows that Christianity presents us with no definitive result; that, notwithstanding its existence as a realised fact, it not only creates unending movements, but remains in itself a perpetual problem, a task that is ever renewed.

(c) *The Christian Life*

(a) REGENERATION OF THE INNER LIFE

The inner transformation which life undergoes owing to the new relations is rendered more clear by comparison with Greek conceptions. So long as the problem mainly consisted in bringing man into relation with a fully developed environment, and in filling his life with this relation, knowledge necessarily formed the substance of spiritual existence. Where, however, the question is one of co-operating in the upbuilding of a new world and of elevating one's own nature, the main thing becomes a new direction of life, a comprehensive act affecting the whole being. This act cannot be directed toward the achievement of anything in the existing world, for the aim is the creation of a new world opposed to the present one; nor will it suffice merely to shift the centre of gravity in the given state of the soul to some other faculty than knowledge, such as feeling or volition; what is required is to penetrate to the farthest depths of one's being, and by summoning and concentrating all one's power give a new soul to the inner life. The struggle to gain such a soul converts the previous activities into something merely external, and produces a gradation within one's own being; it creates difficult problems for the spiritual life itself, and at the same time gives



it a positive character; while in the Greek world the conception of spirit was chiefly determined by contrast with sensuousness, and therefore appeared the more negative in proportion as it was strictly taken.

But the Christian scheme of life is not determined by abstract conceptions; it is determined rather by the special circumstance that man has rebelled against God, and thereby become estranged from his own nature; his true self, his moral existence, is thus in most imminent peril; the one concern is to rescue his immortal soul from death and the devil. In view of the seriousness of the obstacles, life assumes the character of an intense struggle, a decision concerning existence itself, a decision between eternal bliss and eternal ruin. The question of reconciliation with God acquires an intense urgency, indeed it becomes the only question; all other problems now seem secondary; they can in fact become an object of hatred, if they stand in the way of the aim that is alone imperative.

Such passionate fervour and irresistible force in the one desire of life makes all previous seeking for happiness appear insipid and unsubstantial. To be sure, this strong affirmation of life may easily coincide with a much lower impulse, a tenacious clinging to some form of self-seeking. But such by no means corresponds to the deeper sense of Christianity. Rather, the Christian conviction is that the way to a proper self-affirmation is through rigorous self-denial; that what is needed is not merely an intensified natural being, but the birth, through fellowship with God, of a new supernatural being. Such a belief regards religion, not, as did most of the Greek thinkers, merely as an agreeable ornament of existence, but as the source of a new life, as the fundamental condition of spiritual self-preservation. In this view, the individual derives an abiding personal worth, not from his own nature, but alone from God; it is only through heavy sacrifices, only by the destruction of the old character, that a new man is born.

At the same time, the union with God lifts spiritual effort above the caprice of the individual. The soul, whose immortal

welfare is at stake, is no private affair of the man, its saving not a benefit that may be renounced; much rather it is an incomparable treasure, a good held in trust, which under no circumstances may be abandoned. The invisible relations of an eternal order here touch the feelings with their mystery, and give to life the deepest seriousness. Yet life is not oppressed by the earnestness it assumes, since the divine act of exaltation ceaselessly creates a world of love and freedom, and uplifts the individual to become a partaker in it. Through infinite power and goodness the impossible becomes possible. Thus perishes in the life-currents of a new world all the rigidity of a separate existence; with liberation from the narrowness of a self-willed ego man gains a broader and purer self. And from sharing in the inexhaustible wealth of a new world there flows boundless joy and blessedness, experiences which lie beyond all selfish indulgence or vulgar happiness.

By means of such a purification, man's oft repressed but never extinguished longing for happiness becomes ennobled and justified; the dilemma of adopting either an egoistic self-assertion or a meaningless renunciation disappears. Those emotions, so often aroused and repressed, pain and joy, care and hope, are now severed from merely human things, and taken up into the spiritual life itself. They thus gain an inner elevation and an unassailable position; and the process of life is not weakened but strengthened.

Considered also as to its historical effects, Christianity infused into an exhausted state of society a new impulse, and offered to a venerable civilisation a world full of fresh problems. This is specially evident when we compare the philosophers of the declining period of antiquity with the earlier Church Fathers. The philosophers far surpass the latter in the perfection of form, in the analysis of conceptions, indeed in the whole matter of theoretical demonstration. But upon all their work there weighs the fatal consciousness of the emptiness and worthlessness of human existence; it prevented them from putting forth their strength, and forbade all dedication to high aims. It is therefore

perfectly intelligible that the victory fell to the Church Fathers, who had a new life, a great future, to offer, and who could summon men to triumphant, joyous activity, and to positive happiness.

( $\beta$ ) THE CLOSER UNION OF MANKIND

The new life effects a profound change in the reciprocal relations of men, but not so much through doctrines and ideas as through the influence of actual results. Just as the elevation of one's being to freedom and unity reveals the man to himself, brings him nearer to himself, so the mutual understanding between men may increase, they may become more intelligible to one another, and live more in and with another. Moreover, the imperishable worth which the life with God confers upon the individual makes man of greater worth also to his fellowmen; amid the evils of actual life one may here fall back upon an inner being founded in God, and so hold firmly to an ideal of man without at the same time falsely idealising him. Only through such an emphasis of human worth is Christianity enabled to make love the fundamental feeling, and set high aims for action. It exhibits in this respect the greatest unlikeness to all systems of mere sympathy, the languid resignation of which eventually weighs men down, and paralyses all vital feeling. These can never produce the joy in human life and in human nature, nor the expansion and blessings of fellowship, which Christianity knows.

The life in common is upheld and strengthened by the consciousness of a similarity of destiny and of inner character. However different the stations and callings which life may assign to individuals, the one supreme task of forming a new nature is common to all. Even moral differences pale and vanish so soon as man ceases to compare himself with other men, as did the Greeks, and looks instead to an ideal of divine perfection, thus applying an absolute and not a relative standard.

But those general characteristics of the kingdom of God which produce greater solidarity and intimacy among human relations

are further strengthened by the unifying power of all great historical movements. The divine revelations on which life depends are not vouchsafed merely to individuals, but to humanity as a whole, in the sense that they require for their expression social organisation and social forces. Thus humanity becomes united in an inner community of life and in the upbuilding of a new kingdom; in such a community the individual can both receive from and contribute to the whole; the doing and suffering of each acquires a significance for all. Indeed, each event in the life of the individual is experienced in and through the destiny of the whole, and rests upon the latter as upon its abiding foundation.

To be sure, such changes bring to light great problems and produce mighty conflicts. The growth of the life in common must not suppress the independence of the individual. It was, in fact, Christianity that so immeasurably exalted the individual and, particularly during the first centuries, made all advancement dependent upon his freedom. How easily, on the contrary, the antagonistic forces which the Christian scheme of life should aim to harmonise fall asunder and oppose one another, is shown by the incessant conflicts running through the whole course of Christian history.

#### (γ) THE ACQUISITION OF A HISTORY

The ancient views of life bore throughout an unhistorical character. The numerous philosophical doctrines of the procession of endless similar cycles, which continually return to the starting point, were only the expression of the conviction that all movement at bottom brings nothing new, and that life offers no prospect of further improvement. When the days were good, this feeling occasioned no depression, since life was fully occupied with the present; but when they were bad, the sense of emptiness was inevitable. The profoundest Greek thinkers, indeed, viewed the temporal life as a reproduction of eternity; but they knew nothing of an entrance of the eternal into time,



a meeting of time and eternity. Christianity radically changed all this. For in the Christian view, the Eternal reveals the whole depths of His nature within time, thereby sets infinite tasks, and produces in the world of man the most stupendous movements. For here the battle rages over salvation or destruction, here the liberation from the mere state of nature is attained, here the up-building of a kingdom of God is accomplished. The presence of the eternal in time is what first produces a world-history, and gives a true history also to individual life. With such a liberation from an inherited nature, individuals, peoples, and even the whole of humanity are no longer confined within prescribed limits; by means of revolutions and reforms they can make new beginnings and create new powers; they can battle with themselves, and overcome themselves. A mighty desire, a divine discontent, is implanted in life.

But again, these fruitful changes are offset by serious complications. How the eternal can enter into history without ceasing to be eternal; how, without loss, the divine can share in the growth and change inseparable from time, remain an unexplained mystery. Thus a direct contradiction and a stubborn conflict mark the whole history of Christianity. One party sets the eternal before history, the other history before the eternal. In the latter case, there is the tendency to concentrate attention upon fixed and limited facts, and to let these work exclusively and directly upon mankind, but also the attendant danger of confining the present to a single point in the past, and of unduly restricting the range of Christian thought; in the former, we have the effort to comprehend Christianity in its essence and effect as a universal and continuous fact, to transform all that has been achieved in history into the immediate present, and at the same time to illuminate it with knowledge, but also the corresponding danger of dissipating the historical element and of dissolving the whole too much into a mere view of the world. This entails tremendous conflicts; but amid all the heat of strife there abide the acquisition of a history and the exaltation of action.

## (δ) THE NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD SUFFERING

As in the actual fashioning of Christian life contrasts continually meet, so an appreciation of it must take into consideration conflicting influences; their joint effect is to produce a thoroughly individual type of feeling for life. It is in direct contradiction with the character of Christianity to begin by minimizing suffering and by assuring men that misery is immaterial: scarcely anything repels so much as the impertinence of representing the world as it is as a realm of reason; if it were such, indeed, the whole question of turning to a new world—the main thesis of Christianity—would be superfluous. The fact is, Christianity, with the new seriousness it lends to life, with its insistence upon absolute perfection, with its enhancement of the worth of man and of each individual, and its strong desire for love and happiness, must immeasurably increase man's sensitiveness to darkness and woe. Hence it does not forbid us the full recognition of suffering; rather, it characterises indifference toward suffering as a hardening of the heart. It was, in fact, just this, that Christianity permits the frank admission of all the evils and woes of existence, and allows the sense of suffering the fullest expression, that won the minds of men at the outset and has won them ever since; this feeling, which was elsewhere suppressed, found here a free expansion, and in consequence life as a whole increased in warmth and in sincerity.

But, on the other hand, Christianity is as far removed from a languid pessimism as it is from a shallow optimism. The immediate world, whose misery threatens to overwhelm us, is not the be-all and end-all; a belief, founded as upon a rock, here points beyond the present to a realm of divine life transcending all conflicts. That reason is the root of all reality is a thesis now defended with greater energy than ever before. Moreover, there is an inner exaltation of suffering. God has taken the burden of it upon Himself, and thereby sanctified it; from obstinate unreason, it is now converted into a means of the awak-

ening, purification, and regeneration of life; the descent serves as an ascent, destruction as an exaltation, the dark pathway of death as the portal of a new life. As the divine love shrank not from the deepest abyss, so also in the human sphere suffering enkindles a self-sacrificing devotion and an active love. It is in suffering that the most intimate relation to God originates; while the common fact of suffering proves to be the strongest bond between men. Accordingly, the practical attitude toward suffering changes. The misery of human existence is no longer pushed to one side and kept at a distance, it is sought out and energetically taken in hand, in order to manifest love in relieving it and to awaken love in response. The conflict with suffering, particularly its inner conquest, becomes the principal aim of effort. In this spirit, Christianity can exalt the despised cross into its symbol, and direct thought and meditation continually toward suffering, without falling under the latter's power. Whereas ancient art, even when representing death, aimed by an impressive portrayal of it to lead men's thought back to life, Christian art, with its pictures of saints and martyrs sets death in the midst of the labours and joys of life, not in order to cast a gloom over life, but to invest it with sublimer, invisible relations.

This attitude toward suffering has degenerated often enough into trivial sentimentality or morbid pleasure. Such a tendency, however, is in direct conflict with the spirit of Christianity, since not only is it opposed by the depth of Christian earnestness, but also suffering and unreason by no means disappear with the inner victory over them; on the contrary, evil remains a permanently insoluble mystery. The development of the Christian life itself involves far too many conflicts, cares, and doubts, to leave any room for comfortable self-indulgence. Not only do those cares and conflicts disturb the bliss of Christian faith, but the appearance of new joys increases the sense of pain. The inner aspect of the struggle is indeed changed, but the conflict itself has not ceased; for the strength of the Christian life does not lie in a simple destruction of evil, but in the power to oppose

to the principle of evil a new and a higher world. Hence, within a single life two opposite moods make themselves felt, a painful and a joyful one: the suffering cannot disturb the joy, the joy cannot extinguish the suffering. But, inasmuch as each develops itself completely and without obstruction, existence acquires inner breadth and ceaseless movement. And that which thus fills life also finds expression in art; for nothing is more characteristic of Christian art than complete emancipation of mood and fluctuation between the opposite extremes of darkness and light, misery and bliss.

(d) *The Complications and the True Greatness of Christianity*

Thus Christianity abounds in contrasts; its conduct of life bears a thoroughly antithetical character,—just as its chief minds are fond of using antitheses, declaring the difficult to be easy, the distant to be near, the miracle to be a commonplace. The collision of these opposing tendencies produces ceaseless movement; for, as a whole, the Christian life remains an ever-renewed quest and conflict; it retains to the end an unfinished, unreconciled, unrationalised character, ever calls forth new problems, becomes itself a problem, and must ever reascend to its own true height. Dangers and hindrances threaten it step by step; its history cannot be a peaceful progress, it becomes an alternation of advance and retreat, of ascent and descent, of decline and recovery.

One thing in particular results in incessant perplexity, the fact, namely, that Christianity erects within the domain of nature a supernatural world, that it continually seeks to rise above the conditions which are the essential means of its own life. An immediate consequence is the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of an appropriate representation in thoughts and conceptions; every exposition remains a mere approximation, retains a symbolic character. But the demand of man for tangible truth and definite results allows this imperfection to be readily misunderstood or forgotten; there results crystallisation,



coarsening, falling back upon nature, and the most serious confusions become inevitable.

No less are the higher motives of conduct continually overborne by those upon a lower level. The new affirmation of life, with its bliss, is often degraded to the service of the natural greed of life, the selfish demand for happiness; what ought to lift the man, by decisive volition, above himself, becomes instead a confirmation of his natural state. When, further, parties arise, and the powers of the world seek to press Christianity into their service, to exploit it for their own ends; when, in particular, all the inwardness, self-denial, and humility before God which characterise it, are perversely interpreted as a command of slavish obedience to men and to human institutions, of an uncomplaining endurance of all manner of unreason, then the vision becomes more and more clouded. Can we deny that, seen from without, the history of Christianity presents, on the whole, an unedifying spectacle, and that it is only when we consider the innermost soul of its development that an appreciative estimate becomes possible? Christianity, in fact, has experienced in a peculiar degree the truth of the Kantian saying, "Even the sublimest of things is belittled at the hands of man, so soon as he appropriates it to his own uses."

Added to these inner difficulties is the incessant hostility from without, the conflict with doubt, which necessarily increases with the progress of civilisation. The immediate impression of the world is against Christianity; and their ways lead ever further apart. Consequently, in order to assert itself, it is compelled to insist more and more energetically upon a reversal of the entire view of the world, to oppose to the visible world an invisible one, and to defend the latter as the soul of all reality. This requires not only a summoning of the whole personality, but a passage through experiences and changes; also a heroic elevation of mind and being. For, notwithstanding its inwardness and tenderness, the Christian life has a heroic character. But its heroism is radically different from the ancient heroism;

it is a heroism of the inner nature, and of simple humanity; a heroism in little things, a greatness arising from joyous faith and ungrudging self-sacrifice.

So far as human and historical relations are concerned, these characteristics lead us to expect endless complications; more definitely than in other religions does the history of Christianity become an arduous effort to realise its own being, a struggle to attain the highest development of its own nature. Yet no mere struggle; for it has been also a victory and a regeneration; we only need to look from the single phases to the whole, and to penetrate beyond the outward appearance to the moving causes, in order to recognise that a mighty life-force has been implanted in the world, and to become aware of the profoundest effects upon the whole of human existence.

Christianity has revealed a new world, and, through the possibility of sharing in it, conferred upon human nature an incomparable greatness and dignity, and upon the work of life an intense earnestness and a real history. It could not simply abolish the misery of the world, but it could rise above it as a whole, and thus inwardly triumph over its hostility. It has not made life easier but more difficult; yet in an original innermost recess it has lifted all oppressive weight from man by basing his nature upon freedom, and by breaking all the bonds of fate and of unyielding Nature. It has brought no definitive solution, no comfortable repose; it has plunged man into grievous unrest and hard struggle; it has thrown his whole existence into ceaseless commotion. But his life has not only been made far more significant by these conflicts and trials, there is held in continual readiness for him a region where the strife does not penetrate, and whence peace is diffused over the whole of existence. Withal, Christianity has not only called individuals to an ennobling change of life, but also opened to peoples and to humanity the possibility of a continual renewal—one might almost say, of an eternal youth. From all the errors of its relations to the world it could always withdraw into a realm of faith and contemplation as into its true home, in order there to recuperate its powers,

and even to restore its outward aspect. All the criticisms of advancing culture, all the opposition of scientific work, do not touch in the least its deepest essence, since from the first its aim was to be something other and higher than mere culture, since, in particular, it sought not to represent or even to further a present world, but to create a new one. Hence Christianity, notwithstanding its unsolved problems and its abuses, has become the moving force in the world's history, the spiritual home of humanity; and such it remains even where the mind is filled with opposition to its ecclesiastical interpretation.

## II. JESUS'S VIEW OF LIFE

### (a) *Preliminary Remarks*

That the spirit of Christianity gained so much power in the midst of an indifferent or hostile world, and that all the changes within Christianity itself could not destroy an abiding foundation, nor all the disruption extinguish an inner fellowship, was due, above all, to the supreme personality and the constructive life-work of Jesus. As the revelation of a new world, this life-work necessarily implies a coherent body of beliefs, a sort of view of life; and little as this view of life falls in with the philosophical movement of thought, it cannot be omitted from the present investigation, since all the views of life emanating from the Christian community point back to it, and since even beyond this community it has exerted the profoundest influence.

The unique difficulties of the problem are sufficiently obvious. In the first place, there is the difficulty with the sources, which for a long time were accepted without question, but which have given rise to innumerable doubts on the part of modern criticism. That we know Jesus only through tradition, although a very ancient one, and that with the tradition is mingled the subjective character and interpretation of the witness, no one can deny to-day who does not confound religion and historical

research, and thus surrender all pretensions to an unprejudiced judgment. But it is possible to exaggerate this difficulty, by mistaking what the matter of vital importance is. That which is characteristic in a truly great personality cannot be obliterated by any amount of subjective testimony; an incomparable spiritual individuality does not admit of being invented and factitiously perfected; if Jesus appears to be such, even when seen through the mists of tradition, then we may, indeed we must, rely upon the truth of the impression. But now, the sayings contained in the three first Gospels, with their wonderful similes and parables, present a thoroughly characteristic and harmonious picture of Jesus; the more we understand them in their simple literal sense, and exclude all extraneous interpretation, the more individual, the greater, the more unique, appear his personality and his world of thought. The life, at once transparent and unfathomable, that rises before us, enables us to look deep into the soul of the man, and brings his personality as a whole near to every heart, as near as only man can be to man. In the innermost traits of his being, Jesus is more transparent and familiar to us than any hero of the world's history.

The doubt and conflict which none the less existed and still exist as to the view to be taken of him are due less to the sources themselves than to extraneous convictions which obscure our vision. Very early, faith in Christ's work of reconciliation and redemption supplanted the interest in the life and teachings of the man Jesus; in particular, the ecclesiastical doctrine of the divinity of Christ was little favorable to a precise and accurate conception of Jesus's personality. The separation of two natures, whose union indeed might be decreed, but could not be brought to a living reality, led to the constant confusion, in the faith of the Christian church, of two views of Christ: on the one hand he was divine, existing in transcendent majesty, but possessing an abstract and featureless character; on the other, he was human, with a predominance of the traits of tenderness and suffering, yet there was here a failure to recognise the



joy in life and the heroic power of Jesus; often, too, there was a tendency toward the sentimental, particularly when the conception of vicarious suffering occupied the foreground of the picture.

When, however, the traditional view of the Church became unsettled, new dangers arose. Even in differing from the Church, men did not wish to surrender the relation to Jesus; hence each side sought to strengthen its position by an appeal to this relationship. The result was that each found in it what was favourable to his own view; and thus it was the varying requirements of the time which modified the historical picture first one way then another. But from early rationalism down to the present time such a procedure resulted in something too advanced, enlightened, and cultivated; not only the contemporary historical colouring, but even the distinguishing and overmastering elements of Jesus's character, became obscured. Whoever makes of Jesus a normal man finds it nearly impossible to do justice to his greatness. As opposed to such a levelling rationalism, there has sprung up of late a movement of historical research which insists upon a recognition of the simple facts. That is of course right: only it should not be forgotten that epoch-making personalities never reveal themselves in single utterances, but only as a whole, and hence from within; and that such an apprehension of the whole is only possible to a corresponding whole of personal conviction. Historical research does not so much decide the contest as transfer it to other ground. In general, the estimate and comprehension of great personalities resolves itself in the end into a conflict of principles; and the interpretation of the personality of Jesus will never be free from strife, but will always divide men into opposing parties. Every solution of the problem from the historical side, however, must undertake both to do full justice to the peculiarities belonging to the history of the time, and also to make it intelligible how a doctrine which belonged in the first place wholly to its own epoch, can have a message for all ages, can communicate eternal truth to all.

*(b) The Elements of Jesus's View of Life*

The essence of Jesus's teaching consists in the proclaiming of a new order of the world and of life, *i. e.*, the "Kingdom of Heaven," which should be far removed from, indeed in positive opposition to, existing conditions; in fact, opposed to all the natural doing and contriving of men, to the "world." In Jesus's conception, this new order is by no means merely an inner transformation, affecting only the heart and mind, and leaving the outer world in the same condition. Rather, historical research puts it beyond question that the new kingdom means a visible order as well, that it aims at a complete change of the state of things, and hence cannot tolerate any rival order. Never in history has mankind been summoned to a greater revolution than here, where not this and that among the conditions but the totality of human existence is to be regenerated. If, none the less, Jesus stands so far above all mere enthusiasts and revolutionaries, the difference is in the content of the newly proclaimed kingdom. For this content consists in the most intimate fellowship with God, the blessedness arising from such fellowship, and the inseparable union of trust in God with love for men. Seen from the point of view of this content, the kingdom of heaven is already present in the souls of men; its glory appears not as something distant, something to be awaited, an object merely of promise and of hope, but as something very near, something obviously present in our midst and at every moment tangible—in short, as something fully real even in the sphere of human life. Here a new life wells up with new aims and powers, a life that represents impressively to humanity a lofty and imperishable ideal, a life that unites with a great expectation and hope a veritable transfiguration of the present.

Accordingly, the new kingdom appears above all as a kingdom of spiritual life; it lies beyond all outward achievements and manifestations. Moreover it does not require a variety of activities and sets no complicated problems; it focuses the

whole life upon a single act—entrance into the new kingdom, full and unreserved dedication to God, the merging of the whole being in the fellowship with God. In this fellowship there develops a pure harmony of innermost life, a complete communication of being, a kingdom of all-embracing love and of unconditional trust, a secure protection of man in the goodness and mercy of the omnipotent God, and, added to all, the highest bliss. Here an infinite love allows nothing to be lost, and confers worth even upon the lowliest. All cares and afflictions disappear in the immediate presence of the divine love, in the "vision" of God; man is lifted above all perplexities and conflicts into a realm of peace, and filled with an overflowing joy in the treasures of the new life.

In this new order, external conditions also are transformed. Man is nowhere left at the mercy of hostile powers; even his material existence falls under the loving care of the omnipotent God. What is needful to man will be supplied to him, and nothing can befall him which does not contribute to his good. A characteristic conception of faith develops, which primarily affects spiritual goods, then the total welfare. Unquestioning confidence prevails that everything asked for in sincere trust will be granted; for, if men, "being evil," know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall God give good things to them that ask him? The right faith can "remove mountains." Accordingly, nothing is wanting to the perfection of the new world, the "Kingdom of Heaven;" nothing hostile remains to disturb its blessedness.

Thought of this new world is constantly accompanied and permeated by the analogy with family life, the reciprocal relation of parents and children, by which it acquires greater nearness and distinctness. Just as in the family there is on the one hand a loving, self-sacrificing care, lavished without thought of reward or gratitude, and on the other, an unreserved devotion, and an unquestioning expectation of help; just as not any special service, but the whole being, the mere presence of the other, gives joy; just as the one offers himself, and the other

receives him, as a whole; so it is in a far more intensified and perfect form in the kingdom of God. The human may thus grow into a likeness to the divine, since it is viewed from the beginning in the purest and noblest way, in the light of the divine. That the new life finds its appropriate expression in the feelings and relations of the family, marks its complete antithesis to ancient idealism. For, in the latter, domestic and social life were modelled after the civic life of the state, and the leading idea of conduct was justice, the justice that demands performance, and assigns to the individual his deserts in accordance therewith. In the new kingdom of adoption, on the contrary, all differences of performance, as also of ability, disappear; from the outset all men are equally near to God, and objects of an equal love. What is here required is the dedication of the whole being, strength of desire and sincerity of trust. That is something which is possible for everyone; and it needs no outward token.

The more exclusively everything is made to depend upon this one conversion of the being, upon the acceptance of the glad tidings, so much the more decisive becomes the demand that this acceptance be given without any reservation or any counter-vailing, and that all one's doing, without exception, shall promote this single aim. As, even in everyday life, a man spends all to recover a treasure hidden in his field, or to find the pearl of great price of which he has heard, so much the more must the incomparably greater spiritual good fill our whole thought. The compromises of expediency are strictly forbidden; nothing foreign to his purpose is permitted to occupy a man. For, whatever a man seeks penetrates into his mind, and lessens his devotion to the one object: "where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also." Thus arises an uncompromising antagonism between the life with God and that with the world; with the utmost possible emphasis the command is issued not to serve two masters; also to put away all vacillating and dallying. "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Even useful, indeed highly valuable, things become injurious, so soon as they come into conflict with



the one purpose; the eye is to be plucked out, the hand cut off, when they endanger the whole man. All deliberating and wavering must give way before the one thought. "For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" From this elevation of mind and of view follows an emphatic rejection of the desire for riches and earthly possessions, of the devotion to the sordid cares of everyday, of calculating and troubling over the distant future: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Likewise, a characteristic estimate of the value of different conditions of life and of feeling develops; whatever arouses a strong desire, a hunger and thirst for fellowship with God, is lauded; on the contrary, whatever strengthens the earthly ties, and gives them worth, is condemned. But since all outward success and material comfort do this, there results a complete reversal of the customary estimate of men and things. The poor and afflicted, the humble and oppressed, are near to the kingdom of heaven, the rich and powerful, far; for the former are much easier led to a change of heart and to a longing for eternal life. No less have the ignorant and the incompetent the advantage over the clever and the wise, who are self-satisfied and self-absorbed. In fact, just as in everyday experience we value the more what we have lost, so he who has gone astray, the sinner, is an object of special solicitude; not only is the prodigal son impelled by a stronger desire to return to his home, but also a greater warmth of fatherly love goes forth to meet him.

Similarly, those seem especially near to the new kingdom who are of a peaceable and gentle disposition, those whose transparent nature and purity of heart remain untouched by worldly lapses, men of homely and simple dispositions, in whom the perplexities of life have not destroyed the sense for that which is most of all needful. Thus, opposed to the everyday occupations of trade, to the rigidity and narrowness of humdrum life, there here opens, through the fundamental relation of man to God, a rich, continuous, ever-flowing life; out of it rises the sanctuary of a new world, destined to sway the whole of reality.

The estimate placed upon the life of the child finds herein its confirmation. The child—obviously it is the period of tender, helpless infancy that is chiefly in mind—in the simplicity of its nature and the innocence of its dependence, in its clinging to others, becomes the perfect pattern of those who seek after God: they who would enter the kingdom of God are required to turn and become as little children. The child's nature is thus for the first time adequately revealed to the spiritual eye of mankind. Children appear as something sacred and inviolable, as protected by the divine love and as specially near to the divine nature; "for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." In these simple words is contained a complete reversal of human feeling. Later antiquity, too, had concerned itself not a little with the child and his life; statues of children formed a favourite subject of its art. But it did not at all behold in the child the germ and the prophecy of a new and purer world, rather merely full and fresh nature; its works of art "represent throughout the drollery, the roguishness, the playfulness, even the quarrelsomeness and stealth, but above all that lusty health and vigour which should be one of the chief attributes of the child" (Burckhardt). Thus it is the outward approximation that so pointedly shows the inner divergence between the two worlds.

In the new life earnestness and gentleness hold an even balance. Since the work of salvation is directed mainly toward the weak and erring, toward them that labour and are heavy laden; since guilt is blotted out through love and mercy; and since all the relations of life are governed, not by rigid standards, but by the law of love and by the inward disposition, the yoke proves to be easy and the burden light. The Son of man came not to destroy but to fulfil, to seek and to save them that are lost. But the seriousness of life suffers no detriment by clemency. A divine order extends its sway over our existence, and the demands of a holy will give to human decision a momentous significance. The salvation of the immortal soul is at stake. It has been entrusted, like a priceless treasure, to man's keeping; he must,

and he will, one day give an account of his stewardship. The moment is irrecoverable, and its consequences reach to all eternity.

(c) *The Religion and the Ethics of Jesus*

Such a profound change in the demands and in the hopes of life naturally addresses itself to the whole man, with the result that the organisation of the work of life and the progress of civilisation lose all interest for him. The sum of duty is comprised in the twofold injunction, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "thy neighbour as thyself." Stress is thus laid solely on religion and morals. Yet these are not treated as separate spheres, but as related aspects of one and the same life. Love of God and love of man form an indivisible whole.

The relations of men to one another rest throughout upon the community of nature between man and God, revealed by the kingdom of heaven: it is only from God that men gain a relationship to one another, only in religion that morals have a foundation. On the other hand, morality or humane conduct forms an indispensable confirmation of religion; religion manifests its genuineness by leading men to helpful, self-denying conduct. Simple as this seems, and little new as it is in teaching, the most momentous changes are none the less due to it.

Religion is here a complete absorption in the life with God, a ceaseless turning of the whole nature toward Him; it is that ennobling harmony of mind which is full of blessing, and which we designate by the term "love." As the core of all life, religion is not a mere supplement to other forms of activity, but operates in and through all activity as its soul. If religion in this sense is an attitude toward the whole of experience, it is a mistake to identify it with any special acts. Consequently, there is here the most emphatic repudiation of all alleged religious activity which is set apart from life in general, and which lays claim to a special sanctity, indeed an exclusive holiness. More especially does the latter presumption become a source of danger to the simple,

fundamental command of love and mercy; for these are easily repressed, even destroyed, by it. Yet the universal injunction to show love and mercy is an inviolable command of God, while the above peculiar claim is merely of human devising. It amounts, therefore, to a fatal perversion when such dogmas are allowed to weaken the eternal commands and blunt our sense for the weal or woe of our fellowmen. Hence the most decisive rejection of all claims to exclusive sanctity: of more value than all offerings in the temple is the simple command, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

Furthermore, the basing of religion in this manner upon the whole nature results in a rejection of everything external, of all formulas and all elaborate ritual, together with all those subtle distinctions of what is allowed and what not allowed. So, too, the most astounding works of religion (prophecies, miracles, etc.), are surpassed by the simplest self-denying act, the token of true piety. By their fruits we shall know them; not everyone that sayeth Lord, Lord, but whoso doeth the will of our heavenly Father, is pleasing to God.

Indignation at the perversion of religion reaches its height in the denunciation of all vain and ostentatious religious acts, all display before men, all hierarchical pretensions. Since, in fact, all men are equally thrown upon the divine love and mercy, pretense and self-righteousness only disclose a lack of inner veracity. Hence the emphatic, incisive warning against hypocrisy, the "leaven of the Pharisees;" this designates not so much the crude sort of hypocrisy which consists in pretending to the direct opposite of what is actually believed, as it does to the more subtle inner untruthfulness in which the outward act leaves the basis of the nature indifferent, and occupation with divine things is united with cunning, with the lust of power, and with selfishness. In contrast with such a dark picture, true piety shines but the more brightly; it accepts the divine favour in joyful humility, and manifests its gratitude in silent, untiring love.

The characteristic peculiarity of the ethics of Jesus lies a step further back than it is usual to seek it. It does not consist in



striking individual sayings: whoever is familiar with the Greek and Judaic writers of the time can point to most of the doctrines, similarly expressed, in earlier documents. But the spirit that fills all the teachings with a living power is new; even the old it makes new, and the simple great. For, while aside from Christianity there were only the aspirations and efforts of individuals,—the refined reflections of thinkers and the tender moods of sensitive souls—the kingdom of heaven presents a world embracing the whole being; the sayings of Jesus become an expression, a witness, of an original, ceaselessly flowing life. Even the most difficult requirements now possess the certainty of fulfilment. What in its isolation might appear paradoxical, becomes in its new relations self-evident; all the lifelessness and indefiniteness of earlier plans is overcome. Hence a great advance is unmistakable. What existed merely in thought has become deed; what was an aim and an ideal has become living reality.

Accordingly, all the principal directions of the new movement manifest, in addition to their connection with the past, a very fruitful further development. It is in accordance with the general character of the age that the moral problem is not connected with external works, but with the inner disposition. Yet this general desire lacked for its complete satisfaction an independent and comprehensive inner world; hence the spiritual life of the individual remained isolated, and all his laborious striving might appear as lost, so far as the community, and even the vital basis of his own being, were concerned. But all that now undergoes a complete transformation, since the union with God transfers man to a self-sufficing inner world, in which he is wholly absorbed. Whatever takes place in such an inner world has, *ipso facto*, a reality and a worth. The complete subordination of performance to disposition is no longer a pretentious assertion, but a simple fact, a matter of course, since action is directed from the outset, not toward the outward circumstances, but toward the kingdom of God present within. If the action is consummated in this inner world, the external act has only to

make known what there took place; it receives all its worth from that life-giving basis. The disposition itself grows thereby from a passive mood to a vigorous act. At the same time, the distinctions of greater and lesser achievement lose all meaning; the lesser attainment becomes superior to the greater, whenever it represents a higher value in the disposition. The change that has taken place is manifest in the parable of the talents: the question here is not how much natural capacity is involved, nor how much outward result is attained, but solely whether the man's whole power, be it ever so little, has been put forth in singleness of purpose; it is this inner achievement that alone determines the worth of the act. The result is a complete liberation from the destiny imposed by natural endowment and by the accidents of outward success; and the worth of the man is based solely upon what pertains to his own act, the act of his whole being. The power of external destiny had indeed already been broken by Plato; for he placed the greatness of man and the worth of life in the strength and harmony of the inner nature. But in the inner nature itself there remained another, still more powerful, destiny,—the natural traits, and the limits of mental capacity: the liberation from these was first accomplished by Jesus.

The new inwardness of the moral life represents at the same time an elevation above all external formulas and precepts; in the new kingdom man cannot be bound by any dogma imposed from without. Instead, there springs from within the sternest subjection of the whole nature to a spiritual law. Where it is a question of transforming human existence to its deepest roots and throughout its whole extent, even the least apparent expressions of life, the lightest thoughts, become subject to moral judgment. Hence every form of enmity, every form of unchastity, every form of untruthfulness, is forbidden, and not merely such as are manifest in overt acts, and prohibited among men. Neither are any expedient compromises with the alien world ever tolerated; on the contrary, the perfect ideal in all its fullness must be realised, the high requirement strictly fulfilled.

Thus there is developed the ideal of a perfection of the whole being, of a moral likeness to God: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

A second chief trait of the ethical advance here inaugurated is the mild character exhibited in its gentleness, humility, and love of enemies. In this instance also, careful discrimination is necessary, in order accurately to estimate the progress made. There is a gentleness which arises from the experience of extreme suffering, from a consciousness of the vanity of all human things and the implication of all men in a common misery—the gentleness of weakness; there is another gentleness which springs from a joyful gratitude for the great blessings allotted to man, for the wealth of unmerited goodwill and love vouchsafed to him—the gentleness of strength. The former gentleness exhibits sympathetic feeling, and will indeed alleviate suffering in a given instance with a kind of languid helpfulness; but it will not undertake to create new conditions. The active spirit of gentleness, on the other hand, seeks out suffering wherever it may be found, takes it vigorously in hand, and, if it cannot completely relieve it, will at least provide the means of an essential victory over it by the upbuilding from within of a kingdom of love. In the former case, we have a refinement of the natural feelings; in the latter, a regeneration of the innermost being. The one is seen in later antiquity, the other in the morality taught by Jesus. In the latter, the dominant note is the conviction that it is through the divine love and mercy, and without merit of his own, that man is freed from all suffering and called to infinite blessedness. This becomes a source of overflowing joy and gratitude, and creates a gentle and peaceable disposition. The new exhortation is, not to repel violence and hatred however much evil men may do, but to triumph over it inwardly by submissiveness and love. Every wrong without exception is to be forgiven, in view of the boundless forgiveness which man expects and receives from God.

In this new kingdom man cannot be intent upon having precedence of others, or upon reserving anything for himself.

Rather, the conviction of his complete dependence upon the merciful love of God produces a deep humility and a cheerful readiness to subordinate self to others, and to serve them: "Just as the Son of man is come, not that he may be served, but that he may serve." Likewise, all dispute with others, all dwelling upon their faults, is prohibited. This spirit of genuine leniency is manifest in Jesus's saying regarding the attitude of men toward his mission: "For he that is not against us is for us."

But even above the requirement that man should live peaceably, show clemency, and be eager to serve his fellowmen, is the command to love one's enemies, and gladly to do good to them. In this instance also the teaching is not entirely new; but the revolution in life which makes the impossible possible, that not only gives an injunction but creates the power to obey it, is new. For, unquestionably, the injunction conflicts with natural feeling; it would be impossible of fulfilment without the establishment of a fundamentally new relation among men. But such a relation is established by the common Fatherhood of God; this bond unites men from within in the closest relationship, and kindles a love that stirs the innermost being, destroys all unfeeling emotions, and transforms enmity into brotherly love.

Closely connected with the features already discussed is the disappearance of all social distinctions, in view of the one great purpose in life. This also corresponds to a general movement of the time; but the new requirement, ineffectual as mere theory, attains in Christianity the power of complete fulfilment, since here the essence of life is really sought in an inner core of pure humanity which differences of station, education, etc., do not reach. The humanity in men becomes paramount, wherever feeling and effort are governed by the sense of the common Fatherhood of God.

The ready sympathy for all sorts and conditions of men, and the helpful and self-sacrificing character of the morality here unfolded, make the care of the poor and unfortunate an object of special commendation; in fact, to give all one has to the poor appears as the perfection of conduct; indeed, it becomes the



peculiar token of the genuineness of conversion to the kingdom of God. In contrast with entrance into the new kingdom, all worldly concerns are necessarily regarded with indifference; to cling to them becomes an unallowable departure from that upon which salvation alone depends. Accordingly, there is here no room for an interest in civilisation, in art and science, in the shaping of social conditions, etc. True, the parables of the leaven and of the grain of mustard seed presuppose a vigorous further development, and require a tireless activity; they who are the light of the world should let their light shine before men, should preach from the housetops; the salt of the earth must not lose its savour. But all this concerned the extension of the kingdom of heaven; it did not mean that general conditions were to be permeated with the new life. These were matters of indifference to Jesus, and necessarily so; nevertheless, it would be a mistake to ascribe asceticism to him, for how could one be called ascetic who inaugurates a new world, and with mighty power summons the whole man to joyous labour for it? Whoever is repelled by this indifference of Jesus to all merely worldly culture can only forthwith let the whole of Christianity go, since the revelation of a new world, opposed to the temporal sphere, is inseparable from it.

Thus, in the proclaiming of the kingdom of heaven, there emerges a real world which is thoroughly original, genuine, and, in its simplicity, revolutionary. Here everything is youthful and fresh; the whole is animated by a mighty impulse to gain the entire world for the new life. But just because the new kingdom cannot brook a rival, but aims at dominating the whole world, so its realisation is not deferred to some indefinite future time; rather its purpose is to establish itself at once, and forthwith to subdue all. Hence existence is thrown into the deepest commotion, although not into headlong haste and turbid passion. For the aspiration which Christianity arouses involves the full certainty of personal possession; and above all outward activity there hovers the majesty of a life filled with blessed peace.

(d) *The Collision with the World*

After developing the distinctive characteristics of the new life, we must next consider its encounter with the existing world. The relation to the age is peculiarly significant, owing to the unique position which, in his own view and soon also in the belief of his followers, Jesus occupied. For he proclaims the fact of a kingdom of God not merely as a general truth, but declares that even now, and through him, it is to become actual and rule over all the earth. Everyone is summoned to a change of heart and to entrance into the kingdom of heaven. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."

But the answer of his contemporaries did not long remain uncertain. It soon appeared that the multitude was momentarily attracted and even carried away, but not permanently won; while the attitude of those in authority was decidedly hostile. The official religion, as has often been the case within Christendom itself, became the bitterest enemy of a less artificial and truer life. Thus those who are bidden come not to the feast prepared for them; the one matter of supreme concern meets with cold indifference, or with unfriendly rejection. Indeed, the rejection even goes the length of a relentless enmity. Yet upon the other hand, even the best among the small band of followers, notwithstanding the loyalty of their devotion and the warmth of their love, are far enough from meeting the requirements of the upbuilding of a new world: the only truly great Apostle was not won until after Jesus's death.

Thus the prospect of an immediate triumph of the new kingdom inevitably vanished. Without doubt Jesus himself felt this, and was thrown by it into profound agitation and conflict. But in these conflicts he won an inner victory which was complete and entire. Above all opposition, above all doubt and anxiety, rises the steadfast faith that the triumph of evil can be only momentary; for not only do all perplexities and doubts shatter themselves against the inner presence of the kingdom of

God, but the kingdom itself shall achieve also an outward triumph. The Messiah will return, to be the Judge of men and to establish a kingdom of God upon the earth; the stone which the builders rejected shall then become the head of the corner.

How far these experiences and feelings were unfolded in Jesus's own mind, and modified his world of thought, it is now hardly possible to decide; for here more than anywhere else it is presumable that a later age attributed its own moods and struggles to Jesus himself. In any case, the seriousness of his conviction must have been increased and an element of sadness added to it, when the opposition of the world became so overwhelming, and the upward path led through apparent destruction. Deeper must have become the shadows, more powerful and moving the summons. The chief aim now was to remain steadfast to the work begun, bravely to endure persecution, willingly to bear even the most grievous wrong, and to look upon the evil of the present as insignificant when compared with the future glory, which thenceforth far more dominated his thoughts. At the same time, the separation from the world, and the demand of an exclusive devotion to the one aim, became still more imperative; while, on the other hand, all indifference and hesitation were still more decidedly regarded as hostile. This accentuation of the opposition probably occasioned the saying: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Likewise that other saying, which illustrates in the most striking manner the stern exclusion of any middle course: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Yet in the midst of all the disturbances and conflicts there is not only a complete confidence in final victory, but even affliction loses its obstinacy and irrationality in the presence of the thought that the divine decree has appointed everything to be what it is, and that even the malice of men is made to serve the will of God. And even if the thought of an atonement designed

to propitiate the wrath of God at the sins of the world was foreign to Jesus himself, it was certainly his conviction that the afflictions of the just serve for the salvation of others, and thus become an evidence of love. In any case, the various dangers failed to make him hesitate; the last decisive step was taken with vigorous courage; the assault upon the citadel of the enemy was boldly made.

The suffering and death of Jesus have attained a peculiar significance in the thought of Christendom; together with the doctrine of the resurrection, they have become the central point in the faith of the Church. A discussion of these questions cannot be undertaken in the present work; the author's personal views upon them have been fully expressed in his book entitled, "The Truth Contained in Religion." Here it must suffice to point out that even a purely historical view of the death of Jesus would be forced to ascribe to it a far greater importance than the end of life is wont to have with other heroes. In the first place, the manliness and strength inherent in the personality of Jesus are thrown into relief and visibly emphasised by his courageous attack upon a foe so superior in power, and by his steadfast endurance to the end. Then his death, with its deeply moving and agitating impressions, appeared to reveal for the first time to the inner eye of his followers the meaning of what was taking place around them; not till then did the figure of the Master grow in their minds to superhuman dimensions; not till then did such powers of reverence and zealous love as were latent within them burst forth into flames. The accounts of Christian tradition respecting a bodily resurrection are subject to historical criticism, and must encounter grave doubts. But beyond all question are the facts that out of the sudden ruin of their hopes there arose in the minds of the disciples an immovable conviction of the inner nearness of their Lord and of his speedy second coming to judge the world; and that the overwhelming catastrophe did not overawe and weaken them, but raised them above themselves, and endowed them with the capacity for a heroism and martyrdom of their own. The un-



yielding spirit which Jesus manifested toward a hostile and outwardly so superior world, and the dignity which he preserved in his conflict with it, gave to the disciples the certainty of another order of things, and kindled also in them the courage to take up the work apparently trampled under foot, and to carry it forward with unbounded energy. Moreover, throughout the further development of Christianity, Jesus's suffering and death have given a peculiar intimacy to the relation of men to his personality; particularly throughout all the struggles and misfortunes of early Christianity the keynote heard is, Let us show our gratitude to Jesus, who suffered and died for us; let us stand fast, even to laying down our lives in a witness of death, the "most perfect work of love." True, the feeling of individuals often enough degenerated into sentimental trifling; but, rising above individual feeling, the tragedy of Jesus's death brings vividly before the consciousness of Christendom the tragic character of our own world; it shows with a force not to be ignored the dark mystery and the deep seriousness of human destiny; it successfully prevents all superficial attempts to rationalise existence, and all expedient compromises with the world as it is. Other religions have become world powers through their victories, Christianity through its defeat. For there grew out of its outward ruin and apparent disappearance the triumphant certitude of a new world, the firm conviction that in this new world are to be found the foundation and the security of all good; hence all the problems of existence are, for Christianity, concentrated upon a single point, and the turning of life toward the heroic and the supersensible is achieved. Yet there ceaselessly arises thence for men a great question, a great doubt, a great summons, a great hope.

(e) *The Permanent Result*

In considering the permanent significance of Jesus, we should remind ourselves that nowhere does the leading personality mean more than in the sphere of religion—this is in accordance

with the chief aim of religion. Taken seriously, this aim may appear to be altogether unattainable. Or, does it *not* seem hopeless to lift man, in the midst of his human existence, to divinity; to ensure him, notwithstanding his dependence upon the course of the world, a self-dependent soul; to reveal to him, in the midst of temporal limitations, an eternity? Without an inversion of the natural view of the world and of life, without a miracle, it cannot be done. But this miracle is first accomplished in the life and being of creative personalities; then by means of the nearness and tangibility thus won it can be communicated also to others, and finally become a fact for the whole of mankind. Hence the spiritual depth of religions is measured, and their character determined, chiefly by the personal traits of their founders; it is they who infuse an inner life into the framework of doctrines and ordinances, who oppose to all doubts an indisputable body of facts, who continually bring religion back from stereotyped formulas to the fresh vigour of its source.

When so much depends upon the personality of the founder, it was an incalculable advantage for Christianity, giving it a great superiority over all other religions, to be based upon the life and being of a personality which was raised so high and so securely above the lower things of human nature, and above the antagonisms which ordinarily cleave life in twain. There appears here, united with homely simplicity, an unfathomable profundity; united with a youthful gladness, a great seriousness; and united with the most perfect sincerity of heart and tenderness of feeling, a mighty zeal for holy things, and an invincible courage for the battle with the hostile world. Trust in God and love of man are here bound together in an inseparable unity; the highest good is at once a secure possession and an endless task. All utterance has the fragrance of the most delicate poetry; it draws its figures from the simple occurrences in surrounding nature, which it thereby ennobles; nowhere is there extravagance or excess, such as at once attracts and repels us in oriental types; instead, an exalted height of pure humanity in the form of pro-

nounced individuality, affecting us with a marvellous sense of harmony. And this personality, by its tragic experiences, is at the same time a prototype of human destiny, whose impressive pathos must be felt even by the most hardened mind.

So far as the image of Jesus remained a present reality—and it could never wholly vanish for his followers—Christianity possessed a sure guardian spirit, protecting it from sinking into pettiness and the indolent routine of every day, from becoming crystallised and commonplace, and from falling into the rationalism of dogma and the Pharisaism of outward piety; it possessed a power of turning from all the complexity of historical development to the simplicity of the essentially human; a power also of adhesion, as against all the separations into sects and parties which threatened Christianity even from the first. Thus, within Christianity, the movement of development has ever and again reverted to Jesus, and has always drawn from him something new. Thenceforth, Christianity became a perpetual ideal to itself. The “Imitation of Christ,” often falsely understood as a blind imitation, was the watchword of all striving after the purity of the original teaching, of every effort to Christianise Christianity; hence to trace its historical development means to reveal the inner history of Christianity.

This interpretation of Jesus retains its full force also for us moderns, who feel ourselves separated in many ways from his world of thought. The separation, in truth, extends only to a certain point, beyond which it tends instead to effect a reunion. But it ought to be perfectly clear that Jesus represents a definite and distinctive profession of faith concerning final questions and spiritual goods, that consequently the acceptance of him requires certain fundamental convictions, and that, as in the case of every creative mind, so above all in his, men are divided, and will be through all time.

The immediate expectation of the kingdom of God made Jesus indifferent to all questions of mere civilisation and of the social order; hence on these matters neither sanction nor counsel can be expected from him. This separates him definitely from

those to whom the development of civilisation is the chief substance and the sole aim of human existence; it tends only the more to attract to him those who perceive the inadequacy of all mere civilisation, and who see in the secure establishing of a new world upon the fundamental relation of man to the Infinite and Eternal the only possible salvation of the soul.

More important, because more pertinent to the proper sphere of religion, is another consideration. Modern research has shown, incontrovertibly, the close connection of all Jesus's doctrines with his belief in the speedy regeneration of the world, in the immediate coming of the kingdom of God; even the ethics, with its gentleness, peaceableness and joyfulness, derives its true significance from the expectation of the speedy coming of glory; apart from this, it may easily appear sentimental and overstrained. But the above belief has been shown by the course of history to be erroneous; what Jesus looked upon as something to be swiftly and once for all decided, has become an endlessly renewed question and problem. Not easily, and not without momentous transformation, has Christianity adjusted itself to the change. Has it not thereby also receded from Jesus, even placed itself in opposition to him? The change is unmistakable, and a rejection of Christianity unavoidable for any one who sees in the world of our immediate existence the only reality, the final unfolding of the spiritual life. Whoever, on the other hand, looks upon this world only as a special form of being; whoever is unable to see the possibility of spiritual self-preservation, or any meaning and reason in all the untold trouble and labour of life, apart from the living presence of a new world of independent and triumphant spirituality, will joyfully and gratefully acknowledge the fact that Jesus gave powerful and irresistible expression to the nearness and presence of such a world. Not only by his teachings, but still more by his life and suffering, he created a breach with the immediate world; he deprived it and all its goods of value; he compelled men to look beyond it, and implanted in them an imperishable longing for a new world. The form, which we now recognise as transitory, was



then an indispensable means of inducing his age to acknowledge the new kingdom, and put forth its strength in support of it. Let us not be robbed of the eternal substance, because of the temporal wrapping. So, even on this point, we should realise that we are far less separated from than at one with him, *i. e.*, we who recognise the great contrast, and at the same time seek to rise above it.

Accordingly, even the very necessary efforts for a renewal of Christianity, for a more active and more universal Christianity, such as are being made to-day with ever increasing effect, do not need to break with Jesus; rather, even they place themselves in the service of the truth revealed by him, and with full conviction appropriate the saying of Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

## B. EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Before we turn to consider the history of the Christian views of life, we must glance briefly at the difficulties which the concept of history encounters in this sphere. Religion and history are in their nature contradictory. For, just as religion must proclaim its truth to be divine, so it must treat this truth as immutable; and just as it reveals a new world, so it must produce indifference toward the old. Christianity accentuated this opposition in a peculiar degree. Neither Jesus himself, nor his disciples, nor the early Christians, believed that they stood at the beginning of a long development; rather, they looked for the end of the world, for the coming of eternal glory, in the immediate future. It took centuries before the hope of a speedy return of the Messiah faded; it was, in fact, the upbuilding of the Church into complete independence and into a world-dominating power which eventually forced that idea into the background, since the Church then asserted that the kingdom of God was actually present. The Church herself, however, as the bearer of an immutable truth, has never conceded that there was any inner development in essentials. It is also significant

that Luther, so soon as the traditional conception of the Church was shattered, at once fell under the power of the idea of a speedy end of the world; this fact alone makes his later activity in particular intelligible.

Nevertheless, Christianity has a history. It has one, in the first place, for the reason that it belonged to very different epochs, and the characteristics of these epochs mingled in its formation. For, little as religion is to be regarded merely as an element of civilisation, it cannot escape the influence of the life surrounding it. The age in which Christianity received its provisional founding, the age of the decline of antiquity, is in fact far too exceptional to form the normal type of all ages, and to sway the whole future of humanity; it was necessary for Christianity to transcend the age of its birth, and it did so; but therewith religion too was drawn into the movement of history.

So far, however, the movement might appear only as contingent and enforced. Yet, with all its initial indifference toward the world, Christianity, as a permanent power in human life, has an inner need both of drawing the world to itself, and of further realising itself in the world. It must not remain an affair of mere individuals. With such a limitation, it would not so much as satisfy the individual, since even in him will be found an element of world-nature; rather, it must build up a connected whole of life, a Christian world. But, to that end, it must enter into a positive relation with the life of civilisation, although indirectly rather than directly, by means of the transformation of the whole man. Whoever ridicules the idea of a Christian civilisation, of Christian sciences, etc., only shows that he thinks meanly, not only of religion, but also of science and of civilisation. Such a reciprocal relation, however, such give and take, necessarily involves the entrance of Christianity into the movements of general life, and consequently its possessing a history.

This history falls, however, into two main divisions, an early and a modern Christianity; the former characterised by the relation to antiquity, the latter by the relation to the modern

world. The connection with antiquity still powerfully affects contemporary forms of Christianity, and occasions a great many serious difficulties. But this fact ought not to make us unjust toward the earlier phase of Christianity. For the time, this phase was necessary, if indeed Christianity was to rise from a mere sect to a spiritual world-power, and leave its impress upon the general state of affairs. For it could not attach itself to any other civilisation than that which then ruled the world, and which, in the universal belief of men, represented the final result of human effort. Furthermore, the fruitfulness of the union of the two worlds is incontestable. True, antiquity has often exceeded the position assigned to it by the Christian view; particularly in the matter of concepts and doctrines, it often seems as though Christianity had been ingrafted upon antiquity rather than antiquity upon Christianity. But Christianity was, and remained, the moving, progressive force; in spite of the deluge of classical and late Greek systems of thought which swept over it, it never gave up the battle for self-preservation and self-development. And if the total result does not usually rise above the plane of a more or less skilful combination, it always presents important problems, and in one instance—that of Augustine—it reaches a height which places it on a level with the great achievements of all ages, and also gives it a worth which persists throughout all changing conditions. Since Augustine thus represents the highest point attained by the early Christian views of life, and accordingly forms the chief subject of our present consideration, he may also be taken as determining the sub-divisions of the period: all that was accomplished before him may be regarded as a preparation, all subsequent achievement as a further development of his thought.

### I. THE PRE-AUGUSTINIAN PERIOD

The account of the Christian views of life before Augustine presents peculiar difficulties. Since no single achievement rises to classical proportions, we must content ourselves with a gen-

eral survey. But there are not only many differences among individuals, and the permanent contrast between the Greek and Roman mind; there is also a gradual change in the character of the whole. For, with the more rapid growth of Christianity which began at the close of the second century and further increased after the middle of the third century, organisation took precedence of the individual, and outward performance precedence of the inner spirit, while the magical gained ever-increasing prominence. We hope to do justice to these difficulties by presenting glimpses of the whole from different points of view, and by noting in passing the individual deviations.

(a) *A Sketch of the First Centuries*

The utterances of the early centuries respecting human life and destiny are more important as signs of a new life than as theoretical achievements. In an age when Christian communities had to struggle hard both outwardly and inwardly, when the expectation of an ecstatic bliss caused men to live more in faith and hope than in the sensible present, when, finally, the main body of believers consisted of the poor and the ignorant, there was little room, and small incentive, for a connected treatment and a theoretical discussion of convictions about life. It was less a personal need than the necessity of defence that called forth expositions of doctrine; and inasmuch as these were designed for the outside public, it was the single points of contact and of difference rather than the whole in and for itself which obtained consideration. Moreover, in order to influence unbelievers, it was necessary to speak from their standpoint, and to make allowances for their prejudices. Hence the documents of the period are mainly exoteric in character, and much that they contain is rationalistic and utilitarian. What at that time filled the hearts of men is revealed much more clearly by early Christian art, and a visit to the Catacombs transports one more directly into the real life of the age than all the philosophical works taken together. In one respect, however, the latter pos-



sess a value of their own; they permit us to see how far what was new and characteristic had come to distinct consciousness, and how much capacity there was to meet unbelievers with the grounds for the new faith. The various expositions, however, gain consistency only through reference to the life behind them.

The views of life, also, show that morality was the bone and marrow of early Christianity: strictness in morals and inner purity were the primary requirement. The resemblance to the Stoics and Cynics of the time is obvious; but there are also important differences. Side by side with the subjectivity of man, the Stoics posit what is essentially a logical and physical order of things; but such an order cannot give the individual universal spiritual relations, and so provide a support for his efforts. For the Christian teachers, on the other hand, God, the perfect moral spirit, is present throughout the world; for them, the good is the ruling power, even beyond the human sphere.

But this faith is accompanied by the conviction that immediate experience nowise harmonises with it, that, on the contrary, experience yields much suffering and is full of unreason. To turn these to good requires the help of God, for man's power is insufficient; hence a religious faith is here closely intertwined with moral conviction. However, morals are rather strengthened and supported by it than spiritualised and deepened; inward religious feeling, longing for a life inspired by infinite perfection, very rarely finds expression; religion appears rather as a means of human happiness than as an end in itself. Although a profounder sort of religion may have been active deep down in the soul, it failed to show itself in theoretical discussions.

A further contrast with ancient philosophy appears in the fact that attention is directed less to individuals than to the melioration of the whole of humanity. Thus many new problems are raised, and the style of exposition is changed. The theoretical view gives place to what lives in the common consciousness; the immediate impression, the simple human feeling, is developed with more freedom and expressed more openly; the whole gains in warmth and lucidity. But popularising beliefs not only

endangers the perfection of form and the precise determination of concepts; often the mind is also carried away by the anthropomorphism of the popular view, and the heightened mood is not sufficiently held in check by an objective consideration of things.

Hence, a sketch of the early Christian thinkers should not take theoretical knowledge as the foundation, as was done in the case of antiquity; rather, it is the rôle of faith, *i. e.*, here, the comprehension and acceptance of the divine message, to transmit the truths on which the salvation of man depends. A strong inclination develops to depreciate the faculty of knowledge in favour of faith; it is made to appear as a fault of pride to attempt to penetrate the last secrets and to comprehend the contents of faith. "About God we may learn only from God" (Athenagoras). The Greeks, in whom the old delight in knowledge was ineffaceable, were in this respect in general more moderate; with the Latins, the belittling of knowledge was often exaggerated to the point of positive distrust of all man's mental faculties. In two important respects, faith appeared to possess an advantage, *viz.*, certainty and universal intelligibility. The philosophers had to seek the truth, while the Christians already possessed it; faith all could share, while theoretical knowledge was the privilege of the few, since the multitude lack the leisure necessary for investigation. "Every Christian workman knows God, and manifests Him, and signifies by his deed all that God requires of him, while Plato declares that the Architect of the Universe is not easy to find, and, when found, is difficult to impart to all" (Tertullian).

The focus of early Christian faith is the idea of God. On this point important deviations develop, deviations not only from the popular faith but also from the philosophical views of the ancients. Now for the first time there is a strict monotheism, which accepts the one invisible God, but no demi-gods; now for the first time polytheism disappears, although it must be admitted that it later crept in again in a modified form in the hagiolatry of Christianity itself. Now all reality is recognized as immediately constituted by the infinite Spirit; nature, in con-

sequence, loses the old pantheistic deification. To the sentiment of antiquity this loss necessarily appeared intolerable; the new world offered in its stead seemed cold and desolate; it was no paradox when their opponents reproached the Christians with atheism. The ancient conceptions of deity were, in fact, destroyed by the new faith; but the new idea of God, with its imageless reverence and its paucity of names, lacked the tangibility and the individuality upon which the old way of thinking rested. On their part, the Christians not only appealed to the inner presence of the Divine Being, but believed that there flowed thence into nature also new life. Invisible angels, so they thought, hold undisputed sway throughout the whole of nature; all creatures pray; and in innumerable instances, such, *e. g.*, as the flight of birds, devout observation may detect the sign of the Cross. Just as such divine life does not spring from the force of mere nature, but is transfused into things, so nature everywhere points beyond itself to a higher order.

By the surrender of all relationship with conceptions of nature, the idea of God approached nearer to man, the free moral being. Although the expression does not occur, we could speak here, with more justice than in the case of the Greeks, of the personality of God. But the merely human is not sufficiently eliminated, unpurified human emotions being often transferred to the Supreme Being. In fact, much commotion was occasioned among the Fathers by the question whether it would do to speak of the anger of God, and thus to ascribe an emotion to the Supreme Being. To do so would be in direct contradiction with the doctrines of the ancient philosophers; but the fear of the anger of God was the strongest motive of conduct in the Christian communities—a fact which is attested even by the thinkers who regard that passion as incompatible with pure conceptions of God. Still, to nearly all thinkers emotion seemed indispensable; without the anger of God there can be no fear of God, and without this no stability in civil society.

As the work of an omnipotent God, the world cannot be other than good. Hence the order and beauty of nature are ex-

tolled—not seldom in contrast with the confusion and suffering of human life—and held up to unbelievers as a striking proof of the existence of God; to every unprejudiced mind the glorious works of nature must clearly proclaim the invisible Overseer. The world, however, has a fixed boundary not only in space, as was believed even in antiquity, but also in time, as was now taught in opposition to the ancient philosophy of history. There is no endless series of cycles; but, just as it has a beginning, so the world has an end, in time; whatever takes place in it, above all, the great conflict of God with evil, happens once and never again, although the consequences extend through all eternity. The importance of human conduct is emphasised to the utmost by this new philosophy of history; and the old way of thinking is charged with implying the uselessness of all striving, since, according to it, whatever is achieved is again lost, and every undertaking must begin anew. The duration of the world is not only fixed, but is also short; six thousand years are often assigned as its limit, with the added explanation that while the world was created in six days, in the sight of God a day is as a thousand years. Even now the end of the world, and, with it, the Last Judgment, seem near. This belief arose in the first instance from the confident expectation of a speedy return of the Messiah; it still persisted later, however, because the fading of the Messianic hope was counterbalanced by the growing impression of the decline of civilisation, the aging of humanity. Even as late as the beginning of the fourth century, Lactantius believed that the world would not endure beyond a few centuries. Hence no vista of an extended history opened before the Christianity of this age. So much the more important became the present, and so much the more imperative the decisions of the present.

No less did a new attitude of man toward the world operate as an incitement to activity. In spite of all the teachings of the Stoics respecting the supremacy of man, antiquity persisted on the whole in subordinating him to the world. But now that his moral nature conferred upon man a supreme worth, he became



the centre and purpose of the universe: all is for his benefit; even the sun, moon, and stars make obeisance to him. But his responsibility increases with his importance; his conduct determines the destiny of the world; his Fall brought evil into the world, and caused all the suffering that the present state of things shows. For the origin of evil lies in the freedom of man, not in the dark forces of nature. Thus the ancient doctrine of the obstructing and degrading power of matter also disappears; for nothing is worthless which has been created by the divine omnipotence. Likewise, man dare not now despise his body as something foreign and common; nor may he heap upon his sensuous nature all the responsibility for evil; for the body, too, belongs to our being, and there is no complete immortality without the resurrection of the body. This doctrine was very repugnant to the Greeks; and it was only after compromises and evasive interpretations that their greatest teachers subscribed to the faith of the Church.

But the higher we exalt the position of man, the keener becomes the sense of his present misery. For the present state of the world must be regarded as altogether unsatisfactory. Innumerable dangers and afflictions beset us from without and from within: there the irrationality of things, here our own passions. In particular, as is natural at a time of serious conflict, thought dwells upon the helplessness of the good as compared with the hostile forces. Moreover, there is no hope that the state of things will improve with the lapse of time, or that through an order inherent in things the history of the world will come to be its own Judgment. Amid natural conditions the good ever remains powerless, the truth must always suffer. Hence the hope of the speedy coming of a new world alone sustains the spirit and makes work joyful; all desire is focussed upon that supernatural future; and at service a frequent form of prayer is, "May grace come, and the present world pass away!"

The opening up of this prospect is the main thing in the Christian Evangel. However, the nature of Christianity is little discussed, and such discussion as there is fails to bring out the

deeper feeling of the Christian community. The Apologists of the second century looked upon Christianity as a God-given doctrine of reason, supplementing such reason as exists in man and manifests itself in history. Especially characteristic of this doctrine are an exclusive reverence for the one invisible God, and an exaltation solely of morality—a morality wholly inward and based upon free conviction, as constituting the true worship of God. Even at a later time the greatness of Christianity was found less in the revelation of a new content, in a spiritual elevation of mankind, than in a more universal and more powerful realisation of the end and aim of all men. Now for the first time Christianity appeals to the whole man, and instead of remaining mere skill in words and doctrines becomes a thing manifest in deeds. The loftier estimate of the personality of Jesus and the more devout reverence for him seldom find expression in the writings of the time, although contemporary art gives unmistakable evidence of their presence in the community. Great importance is universally attributed to Jesus's death, but definite explanation and justification of it are wanting. Writers dwell for the most part upon the belief that Jesus had destroyed the power of evil spirits, and had begun a regeneration of mankind. Yet, profounder speculations also appear. Thus, Irenæus believed that in Christ the eternal became human, that what was mortal was absorbed by the immortal, and that thereby we, too, become sons of God. Only in this manner could the mutable be raised to the immutable. This process of reasoning was permanently adopted by the Greek Church.

How men thought regarding the essence of Christianity appears also from the manner of its defence. On this point a shifting from particular to universal took place with the lapse of centuries. At first, the strongest evidence of truth was found in the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies; what holy men foretold before it occurred must be from God. Then the miracles of healing performed in the name of Jesus were pointed to, particularly the driving out of devils, of which men believed that they had daily evidence. Even the broadest and freest mind

before Augustine, even Origen, held these two proofs in high esteem. But as Christianity gained in strength, its own power and effects became the chief evidence. The moral condition of the Christian communities, it was pointed out, is incomparably better than that of surrounding heathendom; only divine omnipotence could confer on Christianity the power to purify men and make them steadfast in the face of cruel persecutions; only divine help could enable it to grow in spite of untold misfortunes. "For the blood of Christ is a seed" (Tertullian); "The more it is repressed, the more the religion of God grows" (Lactantius). Likewise the spread of Christianity over all peoples serves as an evidence of its truth; such an astonishing advance in the face of the hostile and more powerful world could not have taken place without divine assistance. Moreover, that the Roman Empire, speaking roughly, began simultaneously with Christianity and inaugurated an era of peace, was believed to have favoured the spread of Christianity, and to have been brought about by the appearance of the peace-making Saviour. Furthermore, the Apologists did not hesitate to make the most of the utility of religion for civil life and social order: only the fear of the condemnation and punishments of God compels the multitude to obey the laws. And the ethical elevation of Christianity naturally was not overlooked. It devotes all its power to the improvement of men: in the opinion of Origen the miracles of Jesus are raised far above those of all heathen magicians by the fact that they are not conjurer's tricks, but always have a moral aim. The intrinsic advantage of Christian morality consists not so much in new doctrines as in the communication of a power to perform tasks which otherwise would exceed the capacities of men. The gentleness, peaceableness, fortitude, and patience of the Christian are lauded. Particularly is it the new attitude toward suffering which everywhere comes to the fore. "We are distinguished from those that know not God by the fact that in misfortune they complain and grumble, while we are not diverted by evils and pain from the truth of virtue and faith, but are made thereby only the stronger" (Cyprian). Likewise, the

more intimate relation to one's fellow-men is often extolled. "Whoever bears his neighbour's burden, whoever essays to help the less capable in that wherein he himself is superior, whoever by communicating the gifts of God to them that have need becomes a god to the recipients, that one is an imitator of God" (Epistle to Diognetus). By Eusebius (*c.* 270-340), the moral effects of Christianity are compressed into a single view: "It gives to all a share in divine truth; it teaches how to bear with a noble mind the malice of the enemy, and not to ward off evil by evil means; it elevates above passion and anger and all fierce desires; in particular, it impels us to share our own possessions with the poor and needy, to greet every man as kin, and to recognise even in the stranger—according to an inner law annulling the external rule—a neighbour and a brother."

Because, then, of its gentleness, patience, and humanity, Christianity feels itself superior to its opponents. Yet the powerful longing for happiness and the expectation of a new world do not permit this tenderness to degenerate into effeminacy, nor the self-denial of believers into indolent resignation. The early Christian suffers and denies himself, but he does so in the secure hope of a higher happiness; he thinks not less but more of man and his aims. Lactantius writes his chief work with the definite intention "of inducing men not to depreciate themselves, as certain philosophers do, and regard themselves as powerless and useless and worthless and as born altogether in vain: an opinion which drives the majority to vice."

It is further a powerful incitement to effort, that man must of his own initiative make the decision for or against God. For, although the early Christian was closely identified with an historical tradition and a social environment, the great choice on which his destiny hung was none the less his own act. The complete freedom of the will was asserted with more confidence, barring a possible exception, than ever before or since; its denial appeared to destroy all moral responsibility, indeed, all moral worth: "There would be nothing worthy of praise, if man had not the capacity to turn in either direction" (Justin). To accen-



tuates responsibility to the utmost was indeed a life-and-death matter with early Christianity. Hence, freedom was proclaimed, not as a doctrine advanced by individual thinkers, but as the common conviction of the Christian Church; and it was viewed as extending beyond conduct to matters of belief; even faith was thought to depend upon the free decision of man; to accept false doctrines concerning God appeared to imply moral guilt. No obligation was felt to give a psychological explanation of freedom; likewise, the relation of man's freedom to God's omnipotence as yet caused no anxiety. For reality is here viewed from the human and not from the divine stand-point.

From convictions such as these there results a life full of power, emotion, and spiritual activity. The one supreme aim is to remain true to God through the dedication of all one's faculties to Him. Man is confronted with a momentous alternative: Either success and enjoyment in life, with eternal ruin; or bliss beyond, with continual conflict and suffering here. In making such a choice prudence, if nothing more, would give the preference to boundless eternity instead of to the short span of time. For the present, evil rules and exercises grievous oppression; even if the enemy be inwardly condemned, outwardly he remains triumphant and can inflict cruel wrongs. Hence, the mind must elevate itself above the sensuous present by the power of faith, and in joyful hope lay hold of the invisible better world. With regard to immediate surroundings, it is chiefly courage that is needed, courage in the sense of fortitude. Thus patience is often extolled as the crowning virtue. In this respect, the early Christian was in part near to the Stoic, in part far removed from him and antagonistic. Even the Christian should be a hero and bid defiance to all the world. Especially the occidental Christians were fond of calling themselves "soldiers of God"; and of the thinkers Cyprian in particular delighted in metaphors drawn from military affairs and the lives of soldiers. On the other hand, the Christian thinkers are directly opposed to the Stoics in the treatment of the feelings and emotions. How could Christianity have summoned men to a

complete revolution in their lives, and at the same time have repressed all emotion and commended the "apathy" of the Stoics! The new life is not born until man has been profoundly stirred by penitence and contrition; and in its hovering between the visible and invisible worlds, it is ceaselessly swayed this way and that by fear and hope. Hence, the aim is not to suppress or even to moderate the emotions, but to guide them in their full strength in the right direction: let the fear of God liberate from all other fear. "Fear is neither to be uprooted, as the Stoics demand, nor to be tempered, as the Peripatetics say; rather it is to be directed in the right way, and special care is to be taken that only that form of fear remains which, as the true one, allows nothing else to become an object of fear" (Lactantius).

The absorption of the whole man in the one aim leaves him no opportunity to take part in the work of civilisation; concerned, as he is, with salvation and future blessedness, such work could attract him little, and certainly the less in proportion as the ancient world fell into a rapid decline after the failure of the attempts at restoration in the second century. Thus, early Christianity manifests no impulse to improve general conditions, or to engage in the investigation of the natural world; in both, aloofness, if not open disapproval, is shown, according to the differences among individuals and to the contrast of Greek and Latin types of mind. Art, also, which was by no means of slight importance to the spiritual life of the early Christians, nowhere finds recognition among the thinkers. In this disregard of art there is also operative a reaction against the antique delight in form, which appeared to the early Christians to be an over-valuation of the unmeaning exterior after the fading and gradual disappearance of its living content. Inasmuch as form contributed nothing toward gratifying their longing for happiness, it was condemned as being indifferent, worthless, even seductive; while all effort was directed toward the content, the disposition, the moral constitution. Even a, Clement could say, "The beauty of every creature resides in its

excellence." The Latins, however, carried the contempt for form to the point of indifference to grammatical accuracy. "What harm is done," asks Arnobius, "if an error in case and number, in preposition, particle, or conjunction, is made?" Such views are close to a barbaric disdain for all culture, and already breathe the mediæval spirit. But they are intelligible in connection with their age, and they indicate a turning-point in human endeavour whose consequences endured for more than a thousand years. It was the Renaissance which first brought about a change, and restored form again to honour.

But, although the early Christian thinkers show their strength in the exclusive exaltation of the state of the soul, even here the picture is not without its shadows. The vehemence of their clamouring for happiness places them far behind the ancient Greek thinkers in the matter of the motives of conduct. While the latter with one accord attribute an intrinsic beauty to goodness, and elevate the joy felt in this beauty into the chief impulse of worthy conduct, the majority of the Church Fathers, particularly the Latin Fathers, insist strenuously upon an ample reward of virtue. Virtue is regarded as a mere means to blessedness, a blessedness painted with a glowing fancy, and expected with perfect confidence in the Beyond. In this contemplation of future ecstasy, the actual moral life appears to become indifferent, at least there is no evidence of joy in it. In fact, the early Christians do not shrink from calling it folly for any one to suffer the pains which the life of virtue in this world involves, viz., labour and privation, grief and shame, without a sure promise of a great reward, or, conversely, for any one to shun evil without the expectation of severe punishment. "If there were no immortality, it would be wise to do evil, foolish to do good" (Lactantius). The sharp contrast with their surroundings, and the tremendous tension of the general state of things, may explain, and to some extent excuse, such crass utterances; also, it should be noted that the Christian Fathers, with their popular attitude, reflect the feeling of the multitude, and seek to work upon it, while the ancient thinkers addressed

themselves chiefly to the few eminent individuals. None the less, it remains true that in the purity of the moral motive the majority of the Church Fathers fall far behind the philosophers of Greece.

The greatness of early Christian thought lies in the development of an independent sphere of life, in the upbuilding of an all-inclusive organisation. Into this were gathered what there was of intimacy of feeling and of capacity for conduct; here arose, amid all the asceticism, a new world, a realm of joyful and fruitful activity. It was in itself something great that here, despite all the disruption and friction of the times, the firm foothold for the individual, which had so long been vainly sought, was found; that here a community of thought and feeling arose, which provided every one with a secure intellectual existence and with important aims. Here each felt the closest ties with others; those who believed in Christ formed one soul and one community. Here was realised with greater fulness and truth that ancient simile which likened society to an organism; the believers lived with one another and for one another like the members of one body; what each experienced immediately affected the others also. As a consequence of the fact that the Christian communities were composed chiefly of the poor, and also in consequence of the constant danger, if not actual persecution, to which they were exposed, the inevitable battle with privation and suffering became the principal concern of life. In addition to the private charities, there was formed an organisation of the Church for works of benevolence which spread itself over the several communities. The widows and the orphans, the sick and the infirm, the poor and the incapable, the imprisoned and the persecuted, ought to be helped and were helped. Yet, with all the strain put upon men's powers, the movement did not fall into extravagance; all the concentration of thought upon the future did not prevent an honest appreciation of labour, an earnest devotion to it, and a thoughtful and clear-headed employment of the existing means. In particular, duty was never enforced by outward compulsion;



help was never exacted in the form of a demand, but awaited as a freely offered service. That in practice many difficulties arose is shown by the repeated complaints of the Church Fathers at the lukewarmness and the scantiness of alms; but this fact was not permitted to affect the general view respecting free-will offerings. Although outwardly divided, property was to be regarded as essentially held in common; its possessor should consider himself as its steward, never as its proprietor. Thus, each should use only what is necessary for life, and offer the remainder to the brethren. For it is unjust that one person should revel in abundance while many are in want. This in itself makes luxury in all its forms objectionable. Similarly, any attempt at the selfish accumulation of material goods, in particular the exploiting of commercial advantages, is prohibited. In order to counteract desires of this sort, Lactantius transplanted to Christian soil the Aristotelian interdiction of every form of interest charges, a prohibition which thereafter became a permanent part of the ecclesiastical rule of life.

Coupled with the struggle against poverty was that against immorality. The Christians were surrounded by a polished and luxurious civilisation; dazzling and exciting pleasures allured and enticed; the lax conscience of the age knew how to dispose of moral scruples in a facile manner. The conflict was with a powerful, almost irresistible, current; no wonder that, at least in theory, every compromise was rejected, and that their opposition took the harshest form. All mere pleasure was forbidden, all ornaments prohibited: one could easily become lax through their use, and thus fall under the power of external things. These sentiments crystallised into fixed rules and regulations; many pagan amusements, *e. g.*, the gladiatorial combats, were condemned on principle; and, in general, abstention and caution were recommended. Most determined of all was the attack upon sexual impurity, a matter upon which heathen sentiment was very lax. A new spirit also showed itself in the fact that the same strictness in morals was demanded of the men as

of the women; and further, in the greatly increased difficulty of divorce, which contemporary Judaism as well as heathenism made decidedly easy.

If we consider that the early Christians believed that all these things were achieved in God's service, and also that they were themselves animated by a lively expectation of a new world, we cannot wonder that there developed within the Christian Church a lofty self-consciousness, and that all inner relationship with heathenism was decisively broken off. They regarded themselves as a world-people, who would spread themselves over the face of the whole earth; as the militant people of God: their commonwealth appeared to have been directly inaugurated by God, and to surpass every human alliance. This commonwealth, as is explained by Origen, alone possessed the character of permanence. For here ruled the natural law given of God, while civil laws originate with men, and by men are arbitrarily changed. This Christian commonwealth alone has the character of universality; as the divine fatherland, it seeks to include and to rescue all men, while political states are necessarily divided according to peoples. Herewith the Christian commonwealth appears as the heart of the total life of humanity, as the original people, which had existed since the beginning of history, and from whom was borrowed everything of truth to be found among other peoples.

Hence, the Christian could be in no doubt as to his decision in the conflict with the civil order which became inevitable at the time of the worship of the deified emperors: in danger and in extremity, in ignominy and in death, God must protect the faithful. The unbelievers naturally rejected this aloofness (*ἀμυξία*) as politically and morally inadmissible; and they saw to it that, in addition to compulsory measures, philosophical arguments also were not wanting. But these did not produce the desired impression; the Christians, on their part, persisted in identifying the contrast between the religious and civil communities with that between the divine and human orders. Even at that time all those claims were raised on behalf of the

Church which have endured throughout the Middle Ages and down to the present time.

Thus there were not wanting the seeds of serious complications, which later gave Christianity trouble enough. Moreover, let it be borne in mind that the thought of the time was dominated by a decided anthropomorphism; that there mingled with the moral aims not a little selfish clamouring for happiness; that not seldom passion and fanaticism broke forth with gruesome violence. Still other dark shadows will later occupy us. Particularly after the third century, the multitude were, on the whole, rather disciplined than moralised. But even the disciplining should not be undervalued; for an extended domain of life was thus won for nobler aims. A new beginning was made, fresh life awakened, the seeds of great developments sown. In particular, the power, joyfulness, and truth of the movement as a whole must appeal to us, so long as the stern battle with an over-mastering environment prevented life from falling into idle routine and preserved it from all sham and hypocrisy. Thus, at the time of the decline of a venerable and opulent civilisation, and amid an upheaval of all the relations of life, Christianity offered a firm support and revealed a lofty ideal to humanity; and its adherents might suitably and with full justice describe themselves as the soul of the world.

### (b) *Early Christian Speculation*

#### (a) CLEMENT AND ORIGEN

The attempts to convert Christianity into a speculative knowledge, first made in the Orient, also belong to a consideration of the problem of life. For knowledge in this case does not mean mere thinking about life, it means the innermost soul of life, the elevation of life to the plane of perfect truthfulness. In this sense, it draws to itself all the living warmth of the emotions, and, hand in hand with its own growth, it increases the intimacy and delicacy of feeling.

The beginning is made by two Alexandrians, Clement (after 189 active as a teacher) and Origen (185-254). Both seek to press forward from faith to knowledge; but Clement does not go beyond the general outlines, and turns his thought principally in the direction of morals, while Origen erects a great speculative system, the first upon Christian soil.

Clement is a most zealous advocate of knowledge as opposed to faith. The problem is not very difficult, however, since for him faith means only a lower stage of knowledge, an acceptance of a doctrine on the ground of mere authority. It is understanding, so he shows, that first makes knowledge the full property of man; only with understanding does thought penetrate beyond the metaphor to the thing, beyond the blind datum to the luminous reason. Genuine understanding is capable of so engrossing the man, that he does not so much possess knowledge and insight, as himself becomes knowledge and insight. It is with knowledge alone that we attain a pure, unselfish joy, and no longer need a reward. Whoever demands a reward for the labour, sells his conviction, and becomes a child; the true "Gnostic," on the contrary (Clement is fond of this expression, while Origen avoids it), has been ripened into manhood by the love of God, and wants nothing but the truth itself. If we had to choose between knowledge and eternal bliss, we should be forced to relinquish the latter. But the crown of all knowledge is the knowledge of God. In such knowledge man is lifted above time and space into immutable being, and wholly absorbed in God, "deified" (*θεοούμενος*). Herewith all emotion is laid aside, the Stoic ideal of "apathy" realised. In view of the inwardness of such a life, the mind needs no special proofs; all tenets and ordinances of an external sort lie in a plane far beneath. The true Gnostic praises God at all times, not merely on certain days and at stated hours; his whole life is an act of worship.

There was danger that this lofty attitude might separate the immediate followers from the congregations, and thus disrupt Christendom. But Clement fought against the danger with all



his power. There let knowledge rule, here faith; both aim at the same truth, and allegorical interpretation points out the way to bring the two forms into accord: there let the love of the good, here the fear of punishment, actuate men's conduct; for in both cases the same deeds are required, and the common work of the community unites both in a single aim. In fact, knowledge, which at first threatens to separate men, rather unites them through the active love which springs from it. For, just as the act of knowing is an unselfish surrender to the truth, so it also kindles an ardent impulse toward the manifesting of love. "Works follow knowledge as shadows follow a body." Love is to be manifested first toward Christ, by unflinching witness even to the point of the willing surrender of life, the "most perfect work of love"; then by a ceaseless activity for the Christian community. That all worth here resides in the disposition, results in another, freer, and more joyful attitude toward the world and its goods; the true victory over the world means, not outward aloofness, but an inner triumph. To be saved, the rich man must renounce his wealth, not outwardly but inwardly; he does so by placing it all at the service of the community, and by not using for himself more than is required for the maintenance of life. In this spirit, marriage is not shunned, as a worldly entanglement, but its significance deepened; it is then heartily commended, "for the sake of the fatherland, and in order to co-operate according to our powers in the perfecting of the world." Nowhere else in the early Church does the life of the family receive such loving treatment as is accorded to it by this thinker. "The most beautiful of all things is a domestic woman, who adorns herself and her husband with her own handiwork, so that all rejoice, the children in the mother, the husband in the wife, the wife in the husband, and all in God."

This more friendly attitude toward life is accompanied by a higher estimate of the world and of history. The antagonism between Christianity and its environment, which was so keenly felt by Clement, did not prevent his extolling the order

fixed by God as the best and the most suitable. He looks upon life as a common school, and upon history as a progressive education of mankind. As a part of this education, as a preparation (*προπαιδεια*) for Christianity, the culture of the ancients, particularly their philosophy, receives full recognition. In fact, the Christian doctrine is characterised as a selection and fusion of what is true in the various systems.

Surely such convictions do not express the average view of the Christian communities; Clement himself often enough mentions the dread of philosophy exhibited by the multitude, together with the opinion that it comes from the devil. But that amid all the commotion of the time such a free, inward conviction was at all possible, is a circumstance which should not be omitted from a survey of early Christianity.

Origen was the first to work out a comprehensive system of Christian doctrine. Yet the inner core of the system is not Christian but Platonic. The Platonic union of the true and the good, and its upward striving from the inconstant flux of time to an immutable being, from the obscure confusion of the world of sense to a pure spirituality, dominate the thought of Origen. As a strong outer covering we then have the Christian element, not only in the greater emphasis and the more personal form of the moral idea, but in the closer connection of eternity with time, and in the higher estimate of the historical process and of the human race as a whole. From the interaction of both lines of thought and ways of feeling there results a highly fruitful movement, a wide realm of thought, in fact, a characteristic, typical view of the world and of life. But a complete unification and a homogeneous development of the whole sphere of life is not achieved; despite his many brilliant qualities, Origen lacks the greatness of creative originality.

The conception of God at once shows a fusion of various tendencies. Origen is above all animated by the determination to eradicate the anthropomorphism of his age, and to exalt the

conception of the Supreme Being to a sublime height far above everything human and temporal, and inaccessible even to our loftiest thoughts. Accordingly we have only negative utterances, which could not lead to any sort of community of life with the Deity. In the midst of negation, however, there appears in Origen a striving after affirmation. For when he rejects certain ideas with special emphasis, the opposite is virtually accepted. In distinction from the multiplicity of things, God constitutes a strict unity; in distinction from the finite intermingling of the sensuous and the spiritual, pure spirituality; in distinction from the flux and change of our world, immutable being. To these results of speculation there is added as a new feature Origen's treatment of the manifestation within the world of God's all-pervading love and goodness; it is this which first brings him into closer relation with the faith of the community. Out of His goodness God created the world, and because of His goodness He permits not the slightest thing to be lost. His love embraces all peoples and all ages, and nothing good takes place among men without Him, "the God over all" (*ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεός*), as Origen prefers to call Him. The highest proof of this goodness is found in Christianity, which involves the entrance of the Divine into the world and the union of time and eternity. Here for the first time is raised to full distinctness and power that with which the world can never dispense.

But, in order that the world may manifest the eternal essence and perfect goodness of God, it must be larger than the customary Christian conception represents it to be. Although Origen rejects unlimited extension in space, using the characteristic Greek argument that without a limit it could not possess order and system, he is none the less more concerned with the world's extent than with its limit. In the case of time, however, dread of undue restriction forces him to break with the common conception and approach closely to the old Greek view of history. Origen denies, as decisively as any of the ancient philosophers, that the world had a beginning in time. True, this present world had a beginning, just as it will have an end; but before it lay

innumerable other worlds, and others will follow it. Our present existence is only a link in an endless chain; the world, including historical Christianity, only one world among many. To the Christian thinker, this succession of worlds appears, indeed, not as a mere rhythm of the course of nature, but as a work of divine creation; creation itself becomes a progressive, ever-renewed act, instead of an event occurring once for all. Likewise, the Stoic doctrine of the complete likeness in character of all the world-periods finds no acceptance; for it destroys the freedom of decision, something that forms a chief element in Origen's belief. Free decision, however, is sure to result variously and give to the several worlds individual character. Hence our world, distinguished by the appearance of Christ, may very well assume a peculiar position.

But the Greek and Christian elements here tend toward an adjustment also as regards the content of the world. The Greek view looks at the world principally under the contrast of the spiritual and the material, the Christian view under that of moral good and evil; in the former, evil has its root in matter, in the latter, in voluntary guilt. Origen makes every effort to reserve a finer sort of matter for the good without in any way weakening his rejection of common matter. The essence of reality consists of the invisible world of ideas—a doctrine which, thenceforth, becomes a constituent element in Christian speculation; material being originates subsequent to this invisible world, and continually requires its constituting and animating power. But as the work of God, material being was at the outset far purer and finer than the coarse sensuousness which now surrounds us; its lower nature came as the result of the voluntary degradation of spirits which were unable to maintain the effort necessary to the preservation of goodness. Hence, the opposition of Christian and Greek beliefs appears to be reconciled; the final decision rests with the moral act, but immediate feeling continues to be swayed by aversion to common matter, and thus the way is open for an ascetic ideal of life. But asceticism finds also within Christianity a theoretical justification; in contrast



with the view of Clement, a stricter, most abstemious conduct of life is sharply distinguished from that of the average; not only the disposition, even the kind of conduct, separates the Christian from the crowd.

From such convictions there develops a characteristic view of the destiny and problems of human life. Men's souls, as a chief part of the divine creation, belong to the permanent state of the world, and accordingly must have lived before this present existence; they are found here below in consequence of their own guilt; their goal is a return to the divine height. For this is the abode of degradation and temptation; the body with its weight draws the spirit downward to lower spheres and obstructs all pure joys. But the power of the mind, with its faculty of knowledge, victoriously opposes matter, and amid all the misery of immediate existence there persists the firm trust that in the end nothing can be lost of all that the eternal God has created and protected with His love. Thus the speculative and the ethical tendencies of Origen's thought unite to produce the belief in a complete restoration of all things, in a return to the divine home even of him who has gone farthest astray. While thus the course of the world returns quite to the point of beginning, and in the total movement nothing is either lost or won, the whole of history may seem to be merely a temporal glimpse of eternity, and all the work of the world threatens to sink into a dreamy unreality.

With this return to pure spirituality and complete eternity, knowledge, as the only means of passing from appearance to reality, from the temporal to the eternal, becomes the chief concern of life. Infinitely higher than the daily religious worship is the desire for the pure knowledge of God; in such knowledge everything temporal, everything sensuous and mutable, is transcended, and man is wholly absorbed in God, transformed into God.

Such an ideal gives to Christianity, which embodies it, a peculiar form. Above all, Christianity must mean something more than a single, although pre-eminent, point in history; it must encompass the whole of reality, and elevate it in nature

and worth. Its essence is the complete presence of the immutable in the mutable; it is the super-temporal activity of the Logos, which frees all its disciples from time and transports them to eternity. Thus Christianity for the first time reveals a complete knowledge of divine being, a deification of man. But a distinct transition from such a world-idea to historical Christianity is wanting. None the less its treatment everywhere displays an effort after universality, a broad and free intelligence. Christianity extends its activity over the whole of history; the advent of Christ forms the climax of a world-historical movement. That which had previously existed only in a dispersed and isolated way was thereby raised to dominating power. For from the very beginning God has taken the world under His protection, and at all times there have been just men and those pleasing to Him. But in Jesus began the complete union, the "interweaving" (*συννυφαινεσθαι*), of divine and human; and by this fellowship with the divine human nature becomes divine, not only in Jesus, but in all who accept and manifest the life revealed in him. The true follower ought not to remain merely a believer in Christ (*χριστιανός*), but himself become a Christ. His own life and suffering can serve for the salvation of his brethren. Thus, even in the field of experience, Christianity appears as a progressive work, ever beginning anew, and extending throughout the whole of history.

As regards human things, Christianity manifests its peculiar greatness and universality chiefly in the sphere of morals. In Origen's opinion, it laid upon men no new commands; but it achieved a greater thing, in that it gave them the power to fulfil even the severest injunctions, penetrated to the innermost recesses of the moral nature, and filled their hearts with tenderness and charity. So, likewise, it is ethical greatness and ethical influence which lift the personality of Jesus far above that of the heroes of antiquity. No other Church Father of the Orient has dealt so intimately, so lovingly, with this personality as Origen. He dwells upon the goodness and humanity of Jesus, his gentleness and sweetness; and these noble feelings, together with

a tranquillity of the whole being, can be communicated from him to us, and transform us into Sons of Peace. He dwells also upon Jesus's sufferings, and glorifies martyrdom accepted from pure love as the only adequate gratitude.

Thus the transformation of Christianity into speculation did not involve in this instance a loss in warmth of feeling. Moreover, we see Origen zealously concerned to preserve a close relationship with the Christian community both in the matter of faith and in that of life in general. As to doctrine, allegorical interpretation offered a convenient expedient, and Origen not only freely applied this method, but developed it in technical resource. But as to life and conduct, the estimate he placed upon morals identifies him closely with his environment, while his striving for an eternal and universal content in Christianity leads him to exalt the Christian community above the state.

Accordingly we find that the broad rich mind of the man embraces the several spheres of thought and, to the best of his ability, unifies them. But complete unity is not attained. Even if morality supplies a common bond between the Christianity of the cultivated and that of the multitude, even if the exalted estimate of the sacraments unites all believers, there still remains at bottom a wide divergence. For when Origen expresses the view that Christianity cannot possibly uplift the whole human race without appealing to each one according to his individual capacity and without accommodating itself to the powers of comprehension even of the less intelligent, the contention itself shows how sharp the contrast was between the cultivated and the masses, and how far removed the thinker was from his surroundings. Thus there remain side by side an esoteric and an exoteric Christianity. The former by its increasing independence achieves an extraordinary breadth, freedom, and inwardness. But it soars too far above the general conditions to have any marked effect upon them. Its content, too, consists rather of Platonism coloured by Christianity, of Hellenism inwardly intensified, than of the constructive elements of a new world and a new order of life.

However that may be, the type of Christianity which herewith received its stamp permanently triumphed in the Orient and also exerted a profound influence upon the Occident. True, the increasingly systematic and self-conscious "orthodoxy" which arose naturally took exception to several of Origen's doctrines; and, in consequence, his followers, who felt the opposition keenly, were forced to concede modifications of the fundamental ideas without, however, being able to prevent the eventual rejection of the system. Yet in its innermost substance the above orthodoxy rests upon Origen's intellectual work: "the history of dogma and of the Church during the following centuries is, in the Orient, the history of Origen's philosophy" (Harnack). Down to the present time, the conception of Christianity as an entrance of eternal being into our temporal world, and as a consequent elevation of humanity above all the limits and misery of this world, has remained dominant in the Orient. Questions of the precise content of history, and of the uniqueness of the life of Jesus, pale before the fundamental fact of the Incarnation; correspondingly, Christian dogma formed under Greek influence has not the slightest word to say either of a characteristic content of the life of Jesus, or of a spiritual peculiarity of Christianity. Dogma, in fact, although it appears to mark the complete triumph of Christianity, in reality testifies to a surrender to the power of Greek speculation. The speculative movement, however, attained its full strength only with the aid of Neo-Platonism, which soon began to pour into Christianity in torrents.

(β) THE INFLUENCE OF NEO-PLATONISM. GREGORY OF  
NYSSA

Even the Christian thinkers were unable to avoid the intellectual transformation effected by Plotinus; his view of the world presented far too much of what they themselves demanded for them not to be irresistibly attracted by it. Here for the first time the whole of reality, from its innermost ground to its remotest articulation, was made spiritually living, every-



thing fixed and rigid was dissolved and merged into a single life stream; at the same time human effort was lifted securely above immediate existence, and the sensuous transmuted into a semblance of an invisible order. This movement irresistibly swallowed up whatever in Christianity tended toward speculation; it also lent to Christian thinking a flexibility and versatility without which the harmonising of faith and knowledge necessary to the construction of an ecclesiastical system of thought would hardly have succeeded so soon. Meanwhile, the speculative minds by no means forgot the uniqueness of Christianity; only the appreciation of it was left to the individual life of the soul, and not carried forth into the battle going on in the realm of thought. But even if the Christian element as a rule followed rather than led, it introduced into the whole a new tone, the tone of a softer, more intimate feeling; the whole remained a mixture, yet this assumed decidedly different forms with different individuals. With the intrusion of Neo-Platonism there begins for Christian philosophy a new epoch, as distinguished from the previous predominance of Platonism and Stoicism: not until the culminating point of the Middle Ages was reached was this new mode of thought forced to yield to Aristotelianism, yet to an Aristotelianism which it itself had considerably altered. It will be sufficient for our purpose to recall as a representative of this earlier time a man who nevertheless presents an individual type of life, namely Gregory of Nyssa.

Gregory of Nyssa belongs to the fathers of orthodoxy, and at a later time was celebrated as "the father of the Fathers," owing to his services on behalf of the dogma of the trinity. But sincere as his orthodoxy is, it is upborne and pervaded by a mystical speculative tendency, and appears less as the animating spirit than as the framework of his religious life. In his doctrine of God the perfect personality retreats behind the absolute being, and the desire for fellowship with difficulty overmasters the striving for complete absorption in the eternal unity. At times the different lines of thought are fused in the same conception;

then the Neo-Platonic element easily predominates over the Christian. In the expression "seeing" God, Gregory is thinking not so much in the early Christian fashion of the nearness of person to person as he is of the mystical union with underived being; and the name Father, applied to God, indicates in his mind not only the affection of loving care, but still more the derivation of our being from Him as well as our dependence upon His nature; accordingly, rather the metaphysical than the ethical relationship. The connection of Gregory's theology with philosophical speculation is conspicuously shown in his favourite conception of the infinitude of the Supreme Being. Such infinitude transcends not only all limits, but also all intellectual comprehension; any particular attributes here become inapplicable; true, the thinker seeks earnestly for names by which to designate the transcendent Being, but he quickly convinces himself of the inappropriateness of all human expressions. Hence, he longs impatiently for wings with which to rise above the visible and the changeable to abiding nature, to unchangeable, self-dependent power. In this he would fain lose himself and by absorption in the true light become himself like the light.

With this negation of all attributes, the divine threatens to disappear for us into complete darkness, while our world sinks to the level of unessential appearance. Yet with Gregory this danger is counteracted by an opposing tendency: a union of Christian conviction and the Greek sense for beauty causes him to recognise in the world an important content, and at the same time to make more living the picture of the divine nature, whose glory the world reflects.

The idea of the beautiful was wrought out in Gregory's mind not only through the mediation of Plotinus, but also direct from Plato, and hence possesses much warmth and fresh vividness. He finds beauty poured forth throughout the whole world; order and harmony unite all its diversity; everywhere there is fixed proportion; even human conduct ought to aim at the right mean. The essence of the beautiful, however, is the good, and

the supreme beauty is purity of heart. In our rational nature we bear an image of the Divine Being; although sin has obscured it, by the putting aside of all evil it can be restored, and then it will shine forth in perfect purity and beauty, and lead man to the divine prototype. To this extent, all knowledge of God depends upon the moral attitude. "He who purifies his heart from all wickedness and all violence, sees in its own beauty the image of the divine nature." "Hence, blest is he who is pure of heart, since, contemplating his own purity, he looks upon a likeness of the original." The transcendent majesty of God we cannot fathom, but the measure of the knowledge of God is in us: "Purity and repose of soul (*ἀπάθεια*) and the putting away of all evil—that is divinity. If it be in thee, then God dwells in thee wholly."

But although such an indwelling of the Divine lends to our being a higher worth and to our life a more vivid content, the tendency is always above and beyond immediate existence; with all its resources the world stirs in us only a longing for higher forms of life; it ought never itself to absorb us. Thus life assumes the character of a yearning that soars above everything the world has to offer. "We ought not to wonder at the beauty of the vaulted sky, nor at the rays of light, nor at any other form of visible beauty, but let ourselves be led by the beauty discerned in all these to a longing for the beauty whose glory the heavens declare."

Thus the deepest propensity of the man is to depreciate the actual world we live in, and to destroy our pleasure in it. A pessimism develops whose intensity of feeling frequently recalls modern tendencies. Gregory vividly portrays the manifold suffering and evils of life, the prevalence of hatred and arrogance, of grief and unrest, the power of the passions, whose whole chain is set in motion through a single link. The capacities of the soul are not here trained to distinguish genuine from spurious beauty. However, all particular evils and wrongs pale before the thought of the nothingness and perishableness of the whole earthly existence. Everything here is inconstant and fleeting. The flowers



blossom afresh each spring, but man is vouchsafed but one youth, and then declines toward the winter of old age. The outward fortunes of life are various, and the throng calls many a one happy; but for a profounder vision all such differences disappear; measured by the highest standard no one career has the advantage over another. For, at bottom, all things earthly are vain: who can be happy where everything swiftly vanishes, and we have the graves of our fathers ever before our eyes? There may be men who do not feel such sorrow, and find their satisfaction in sensuous pleasures; but with their animal obtuseness they are really more miserable than the others; not to feel evils is the greatest of all evils. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn." But it was not his intention to glorify sorrow as such, but rather the knowledge of goodness which suffering always brings with it, since the good itself ever escapes us.

Still, all the tenderness and delicacy of feeling here manifest cannot disguise the fact that the thinker is dominated by an ontological rather than an ethical aim. It is not the longing for more love or more justice, but for more of the essential and the eternal, that impels Gregory to rise above the sensuous world to God. That results in a peculiarly harsh rupture. For, if the invisible order alone possesses genuine being, all else is mere appearance; thus condemned, everything sensuous must be put away, and everything that entangles us in this worthless life given up. Among the things which the truly pious man must put behind him belongs also "busying oneself with the sciences and arts, and with whatever in customs and laws can suitably be dispensed with." Following this train of thought—elsewhere Gregory is more lenient—marriage is regarded as the beginning and the root of the zeal for useless things. He who, like the good helmsman, means to steer his course by the stars, which never set, should so shape his existence that it is ever poised in the middle between life and death, and should never give himself with his whole strength to life.

Corresponding to this detachment from the world, there is an absorption in the inner life of the heart and mind. Here